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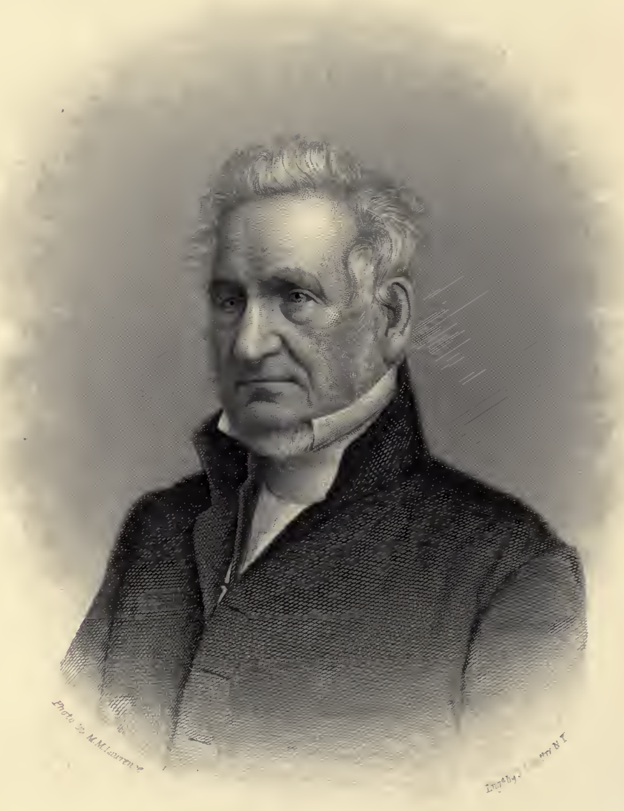
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Eliphalet Nott

MEMOIRS

OF

ELIPHALET NOTT, D.D. LL.D.

FOR SIXTY-TWO YEARS

PRESIDENT OF UNION COLLEGE.

BY

C. VAN SANTVOORD, D.D.

WITH CONTRIBUTION AND REVISION

BY

PROFESSOR TAYLER LEWIS,

OF UNION COLLEGE.

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PREFACE.

THE volume herewith offered to the public requires some preliminary statement. At the death of Dr. Nott in 1866, he had occupied the position of President of Union College for sixty-two years, a period without parallel in the history of our literary institutions. He had long stood in the foremost rank of American educators. His reputation as a pulpit orator was hardly less distinguished; while as a reformer and philanthropist he had won an honorable position among the benefactors of his kind.

Such a life deserved a written memorial. Not only the sons of the College who regarded their old instructor with veneration, gratitude, and love, but the wider public to whom Dr. Nott was so well known, united in the wish to have some permanent record made of his long and beneficent life. To meet this desire, the present Memoir has been written.

The book was prepared in a manner somewhat different from the original design. It was hoped that Prof. Tayler Lewis, a graduate of the College in 1820, and whose knowledge of Dr. Nott, the fruit of half a century's intimate association, fitted him so peculiarly for the work, might be induced to become the biographer of his life-long friend. For a time he gave some encouragement to this hope, but his manifold literary occupations and impaired health, finally decided him against the undertaking.

The work was not begun, however, without assurance from Prof. Lewis of aid, in the progress of it, in the form of revision and supplementary contributions. It was understood especially, that he was to give, in a distinct chapter or two of the biography, his estimate of Dr. Nott as an educator and as a preacher. The promise has been fulfilled, as the reader will find, in Chapters XII and XXV, which are written wholly by Dr. Lewis. There are other portions furnished by the same hand, and interspersed throughout the volume, such as the remarks on "Dr. Nott's Temperance Labors," his "Biblical Exegesis," his action in "Revivals of Religion," his "Interest in Commencement Exercises," his "Love for the Young," the singular "Youthfulness of his own Style," his Christian deportment in "Theological Controversy." The pertinence and value of these several contributions will be at once apparent to the discerning reader, who indeed, will hardly need more to distinguish these passages from the main authorship of the book, than their style of intimate and confidential reminiscence. The marginal notes furnished by Dr. Lewis bear his own initials.

The aid rendered by Mrs. Nott has been important, and, in certain directions, well-nigh indispensable. Letters carefully collected, notes, memoranda, dates, incidents and other valuable material, arranged with skillful hand, and ready for use, have greatly facilitated the labor of preparation. To the assistance thus derived, must be added interesting details as to various matters of fact requiring proper authentication, such as her knowledge alone could supply.

To Judge W. W. Campbell and others of the older alumni of the College, pupils, like him, of Dr. Nott, I would thankfully acknowledge obligation for their prompt and courteous responses to letters sent them seeking aid in promoting the objects of this Memoir. The information obtained from this source has been of much service in helping to delineate more fully the "Life" attempted to be portrayed. Intimate clerical friends of Dr. Nott moreover, have conferred a kindred obligation, among them the Rev. Dr. Sprague, whose "Annals of the American Pulpit" has furnished occasional extracts, wherewith to illustrate and enrich the narrative.

With these remarks the volume is submitted to the candid judgment of the public.

C. VAN SANTVOORD.

KINGSTON, N. Y., Dec., 1875.

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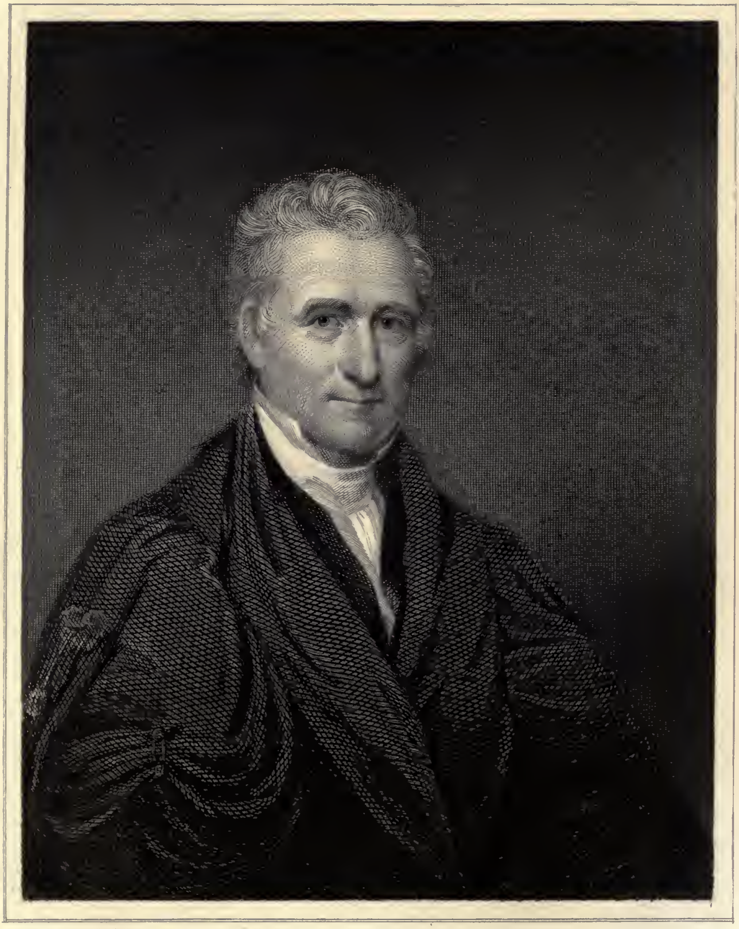

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E. Nott

REV. ELIPHALET NOTT D.D. LL.D.

MEMOIRS

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CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD.

Settlement of the Nott family in Connecticut—Rev. Abram Nott—Character and services—Anecdote—Stephen Nott—Marries Deborah Selden—Struggles for a livelihood—Birth of Eliphalet Nott—His early training—Taught by his mother—Her fitness and fidelity—A promising childhood—Eliphalet's rare powers of memory—Anecdote—Resides with his brother—Studies medicine—Death of his mother.

THE name of John Nott appears in the earlier records of New England among those of the first settlers in the Connecticut Valley. The person bearing it came from Nottingham, England, to Wethersfield, about 1640, thus following, by a score of years only, the Pilgrims of the Mayflower. In several old deeds of the period he is styled "John Nott, Sergeant," and seems to have been a personage of some mark in the colony. He was a considerable landholder, and represented the town of Wethersfield for several years after 1665, as a member of the Colonial General Assembly. He left three children : two daughters and a son. The elder daughter Elizabeth married Robert Reeve, one of whose descendants was Judge Tapping Reeve, founder of the Litchfield Law School. Hannah, the other daughter, became the wife of John Hale, and was the grandmother of Captain Nathan Hale, executed as a spy by Sir William Howe, and whose dying words: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country," will keep his memory fragrant so long as patriotic devotion is honored among men.

The third child of John Nott bore the name of his father. He was married, March 28, 1683, to Mrs. Patience Miller; the issue of this union being seven sons and two daughters. The eighth of these children was a son named Abraham, who was born January 29, 1696. This one alone of the family was favored with the advantages of a liberal education. He graduated with credit from Yale College, in 1720, among the students first issuing from that institution after its removal, in 1717, from Saybrook to New Haven. Abraham Nott chose the profession of the Christian ministry. Having studied divinity, he was duly ordained, November 16, 1725, at Saybrook, and installed pastor of the Second Congregational Church of that town. He remained in this position till his death, in 1759, a period of thirty-four years. The settlement of a clergyman for a lifetime in charge of a single parish, and that life not rarely a long one, was a common occurrence in those times. The pay which a minister received, "to free him from worldly cares and avocations," as the formularies have it, showed the simplicity of the period, and how easily the few wants a pastor was thought to have, could be supplied. In addition to eighty acres of land for his use, and his firewood, the people stipulated to build him a house to dwell in, and to furnish it in part, provided "the said Mr. Nott furnished glasse and nailes for s^{d} house," and furthermore to give him "as a sallery, 50 pounds for the first year, and afterward yearly to rise as their estates rise in the list, until his sallery amounts to 70 pounds per year." This was somewhat better than the "forty pounds a year" that made Goldsmith's village pastor "passing rich"—and, it does not appear that the pastor of Saybrook found reason to complain of the narrowness of his stipend, or was much stinted, either in household comforts or in the exercise of a becoming hospitality.

Abraham Nott was a man of mark in his day. He was an excellent preacher, a sound theologian, was gifted with a keen and vigorous intellect, and had a character at once amiable and decided, to which a warm heart and unaffected piety gave color and direction. Physically he was a man of uncommon muscle and force. While at Yale College he was noted as an athlete, and in all trials requiring strength and endurance he was sure to carry off the palm. He was one of the few mighty men who could lift his barrel of cider above his head, hold it at arm's length, and drink out of the bung-hole.* He was wont to say that he had never met with a man, whom, if suffered to place his hands fairly upon his opponent's shoulders, he could not bring to the ground. He carried his reputation for strength with him even after taking sacred orders, and it came near involving him, at times, in difficulty by reason of provocations incited by the report of his prowess.

Abraham Nott died January 24, 1756, after a faithful and efficient ministry of thirty-five years. He left four sons to bear his name and share the patrimony which care and frugality had made a considerable one for the period. The second of these sons was Stephen, born July 20, 1728, and, of him, as the father of Eliphalet, it will be necessary to speak with some detail.

The education of Stephen was only that which the common school of New England furnished in that day. His mind was active and acquisitive, and he appears to have made good use of such opportunities as were afforded him, sustaining among his neighbors the character of an intelligent, well-informed man. He began his business career with fair prospects, but these became in time much overcast. With some knowledge of farming, and of tanning, both of which pursuits invited his attention, he chose, at length, to try his hand at merchandise. He opened a store at Saybrook in 1749, when he had barely attained his majority. He married, in the same year, Deborah the second daughter of Samuel Selden of Lyme, a gentleman of high respectability and worth, whose descendants were numerous ; among them being found several names eminent in professional and business life. The young bride was only in her seventeenth year at the time of her marriage, and was famous the country round for her good looks, intelligence, and sprightly manners. When, shortly after their marriage, the wedded pair took up their abode in Saybrook, their future wore a cheering aspect. The husband was free from debt, had a promising business, to appearance, and his success seemed assured. Yet this wedded life, thus auspiciously opening, was to prove little more than a continuous struggle. Losses and misfortunes, with their usual attendant, poverty, came rapidly upon them, and the miseries that followed were sharp and bitter.

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* Peter Jefferson, the father of President Jefferson, would appear to have been a man similarly endowed with remarkable physical strength. In the sprightly narrative of Mrs. Randolph, in her "Domestic Life of Jefferson," page 20, occurs the following: "The talents of great men are frequently said to be derived from the mother. If they are inheritable, Jefferson was entitled to them on both the paternal and maternal side. His father was a man of most extraordinary vigor, both of mind and body. . . . So great was his physical strength, that when standing between *two hogsheads of tobacco* lying on their sides, he could raise or 'head' them both up at once."

The first in this series of misfortunes was the burning of his house, with nearly all its contents. This took place in 1759, about ten years after his married life began. Several children had been born during this decade, the eldest of whom, a daughter, had died. The next, a son named Samuel, who will often appear in the course of this narrative, was born January 23, 1754. When the fire broke out, the inmates of the house were asleep ; and so rapid was its progress that they had barely time to escape with their lives. Samuel, then a boy of five years, relates that his mother dragged him out of the flaming house, by the hairs of his head. A clerical guest, the successor of Rev. Abraham Nott, and who slept there on this disastrous night, was rescued by her with even greater difficulty. The loss, though a severe one, was not, however, beyond recovery. A new house was at once projected; and this, through the aid of friends, was in good time finished and occupied. Stephen Nott continued to carry on his business, and there was a prospect of again emerging, at no distant day, from the effects of his late disaster. Within a twelvemonth, however, another misfortune dissipated whatever pleasing visions he had begun to entertain. His custom had been to barter goods in his store for horses, and after collecting a number of these, to carry them to New Jersey and there sell them for cash. Returning home on horseback after one of these sales, with the avails of his trade about him in ready money, he was waylaid by foot-pads, who disabled him by a blow on the head, rifled his saddle-bags, and left him insensible on the roadside. The wound proved not serious, the chief hurt being the pecuniary loss he had sustained—a loss which, in his present circumstances, gave a truly dismal look to his future. A crisis had, in fact, been reached, which, as the event showed, he was not to pass in safety. Unable, by reason of this loss, to meet some pressing liabilities, his creditors became clamorous, and his failure was the consequence. Extreme measures followed. Stephen's goods and effects were seized. Officers were even sent to apprehend him, and to lodge him, according to the law then in force in the colony, in the debtor's prison. Though he evaded these by leaving his home for several months, he was taken on his return and shut up in the county jail. A special act of insolvency was passed, not long after, by which debtors were to be released from the claims of their creditors upon giving up, under oath, all their property excepting wearing apparel and household furniture.

Through the kindness of a kinsman, Stephen Nott was enabled to purchase, on credit, a small house and grounds at East Haddam, to which he moved his family, and commenced business as a tanner. The place was obscure and the business a small one. During the five or six years that the family lived here, the struggle with poverty was severe and almost unbroken. The sum realized by the father's labors, in his new employment, was very meagre, and his health, moreover, became so impaired by the malaria of the region as to disable him, for considerable intervals, from vigorous toil. In this emergency the mother became the main stay of her household. Her character had developed as cares and duties multiplied. Under the pressure of adversity she disclosed qualities which the vivacious bride of seventeen would hardly have been suspected to possess. Her spirit was equal to her energy, and both rose to meet the demands of the situation. Only by incessant exertions could the wants of the household be supplied, and these were given without complaint. In addition to the necessary burdens of a family, consisting then of six children, one of them so young as to require a nurse's attentions, she spun yarn, knitted stockings, cut and made dresses for the females of the neighborhood, and practised drawing, an art learned among her girlhood's accomplishments, and now found helpful at this necessitous time. By these multifarious employments, with some little aid from her eldest son, then a lad of sixteen, she succeeded, during her husband's illness, in keeping the wolf from the door.

Nor did Mrs. Nott's activity end with these tasks. There being no school within a distance of several miles, she became the teacher of her older children, a good education being regarded as an attainment valuable beyond all estimate. She was well fitted for the task thus self-imposed, and while striving to inform and expand the minds of her children, had special regard to their moral and religious culture. She was a Christian woman, worthy to rank with many of kindred faith and constancy whose names shed lustre on the early Puritan annals. The principles she had imbided in early youth, she continued to cherish, and their gentle but potent influence made itself felt among the young members of her household. The lessons she taught, enforced by her example, could hardly fail to impress themselves upon their minds and hearts. In the case of several of them, and notably in respect to the subject of this memoir, there is evidence of the effect which this mother's assiduous inculcations early wrought, in fixing their principles, shaping their course, stirring in them a worthy ambition, and fitting them for a life of honor and usefulness.

After a residence of several years at East Haddam, Stephen Nott removed to Foxtown, about two miles distant; having procured a small house there with an acre or two of land attached. The change, however, contributed in no way to the improvement of his condition. The struggle for a livelihood—and a sore struggle at times it proved—was repeated during the two years the family resided here. In 1772 another removal took place. The little property in Foxtown was exchanged for one in Ashford, Windham county, thirty miles north-east from Hartford. Sixty acres of waste land, situated in the hilliest and roughest part of Connecticut, formed the chief attraction of this estate. The house was small, cheerless, and in poor repair, looking, like the acres surrounding it, woe-begone and desolate. Yet, such as it was, it furnished a home to the family, numbering now six children besides the parents, whose sustenance was to be drawn mainly from the bosom of this flinty soil. The prospect of succeeding in this was dismal enough, but the work was hopefully begun; the wife and mother continuing, as at other times, to be the main prop of the household. She not only bore up bravely herself, but imparted to those around her courage and strength from her own patient endurance and quiet energy.

In this obscure and dreary abode, Eliphalet, the second son and youngest child of Stephen Nott, was born on the 25th of June, 1773. There is nothing peculiar about the circumstances of his birth, nor yet of his early childhood. It was simply that of large numbers of children beginning life in lowliness and poverty, and with little prospect of emerging, in after years, to a station much higher than that occupied by their parents. Both father and mother of Eliphalet, though poor, were pious. They had received a careful religious training in the doctrines of the orthodox Congregational churches, and, at the beginning of their wedded life had both united with the church at Saybrook, of which Rev. Abraham Nott was pastor. Their Christian life was exemplary, and the religious nurture of their children was marked by the sedulous regularity that prevailed in the early Puritan households. The chief burden of this training, however, rested on the mother. To superior natural gifts was joined a thirst for knowledge, which prompted her to seek for fresh acquisitions from whatever source was opened to her ; so that, year by year, she had enlarged her information, and become well fitted for the office of instructress. She had learned much, too, experimentally, from trial and misfortune, stern schoolmasters indeed, but often the best. With great gentleness was blended firmness in the exercise of discipline, and patience such as heedless and sometimes perverse childhood needs. Along with this she possessed keen insight into character, and the rare art of knowing how to interest, win, and stimulate the plastic minds she aimed to reach and guide.

In looking back to this period of his life, President Nott was often heard to speak in enthusiastic terms of his mother's merits and influence. "She was a great and good woman," he was wont to say. "She was acquainted with character, She was the only person who, in my early years, fully understood me, and knew what was just the proper treatment to pursue." And when his renown stood the highest as a successful educator, he often said, "I not only owe my early education, but, under God, all that I have been and am, to the tutelage and counsels of the best of mothers."

This mother was, indeed, for several of the first years of his life, not only his truest counsellor but his closest companion. He was the only boy at this time in the family, his brother Samuel having outgrown childhood and being rarely at home. There was no neighbor's house nearer than half a mile, and he was thus much shut out from the society of boys of his own age. The school-house of the neighboring settlement was five miles distant. Had it been nearer, it could hardly have been better for him, as a means of intellectual culture and growth. The country school of that day, in many districts at least, was a most unpromising institution. The teacher was, not unfrequently, a person with barely education enough to satisfy the critical requirements of some illiterate committee-man to whom was delegated the office of examiner. He had, perhaps, left the shoe bench, the anvil, or the plough, to try his hand for a few weeks at this easier work, designing to return at the close of his brief engagement to his more fitting business. The emolument could hardly have tempted him to turn teacher, for the pay was only from three to five dollars a month, and two months during the winter season was the usual term that the school remained open. A teacher's office, therefore, was not at that time a very inviting one, nor did the school he presided over hold out very strong inducement to parents who desired most of all to have their children well taught.

Mrs. Nott was led, therefore, by a sort of necessity, even had she not preferred to do it, to take upon herself the task of her little son's education, and the fruits of her assiduous labor, in this case, soon appeared. The boy was bright and intelligent. He was able to read before the end of his third year, and at four years, he had read the Bible through. This statement may be regarded with a little distrust, but is really one that rests on unquestionable authority. His memory, at this early age, was, also, uncommonly strong and retentive. He committed with great ease, and could repeat, and loved to do it, large portions of the passages he read. He was especially fond of the Psalms, nearly the whole of which he had learned, and used to recite, at an age when many children are painfully exploring the mysteries of the alphabet. In the flames that destroyed his father's house in Saybrook, had been burned the library which Rev. Abraham Nott left to his grandson, a loss which Stephen Nott's reduced circumstances never suffered him to repair. The Bible furnished thereafter the main volume of the family library,* and it is easy to see how a child, eager to read and learn, should devote himself to the glowing pages of such a book, and that, too, the one most accessible. The knowledge gained from this source, with the faithful counsels of one who knew its priceless worth, was highly educating in the best sense. It begat a reverence for the Scriptures, a trust in their Divine authority and teachings, which advancing years served only to deepen and confirm.

This Christian nurture bore, with the Divine blessing, its appropriate fruits. The child had learned to love God and find delight in His service almost unconsciously. He had at least, no remembrance of the period when that love was not, or when it distinctly began as marking an epoch in his experience.† His life-long practice of daily prayer was a duty whose beginning dated back to a time far as his memory could reach, and the firm hold which his early religious lessons had upon him appeared in the fact that the "Lord's Prayer," which he learned to lisp at his mother's knees, and the equally familiar one commending him to God's care and mercy before going to sleep, continued to be a part of his daily devotions throughout all his busy life.

The habit, too, of a strict observance of the Sabbath, was formed at this period, and became fixed and unchanging. With this was associated the practice of regular attendance upon public worship. This he was taught to regard, and did regard, as a duty not to be neglected except for controlling reasons, and his place in church was ever sure to be occupied, until failing strength made his presence in the public assembly no longer possible.

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* "I might have learned much more by the aid of my mother, if I had been so disposed, though my advantages were really very small. There were no books in the house, if my memory is correct, excepting the primer, spelling book, Bible, and an old sermon-book that was my grandfather's, which had escaped the flames." —*Rev. Samuel Nott's Autobiography.*

† Dr. Nott, however, had special quickening periods in his early religious life, as I have heard him describe them during the remarkable revival in Union College, in 1820, under the preaching of Asahel Nettleton. A special feature of such experience was the new aspect assumed by nature as a "living word" when the soul was under the power of grace. In this respect his experience bore some resemblance to certain feelings so vividly described by Edwards.—T. L.

The Congregational Church of Ashford was distant about four miles from Stephen Nott's dwelling. The Baptists had a meeting-house only a few rods distant ; and here the family worshipped when circumstances made it specially difficult to reach their own church. Mrs. Nott's waning health made her attendance at the nearer place more frequent, and even this began to be broken by longer intervals. When unable to go herself, Eliphalet was sent with paper and pencil, to note the text and points of the sermon, and then came home and repeated all he could remember to his mother. The sermon, heard with this end in view, the boy soon came to lay up in mind, to such purpose, that he could repeat before the family, not only its general scope and outline, but its illustrations and much of its very language. Thus was fostered a habit of accurate memorizing which acquired strength from time and use. In after life he exhibited, on occasion, some surprising feats of memory, in the way of rehearsing legal and legislative speeches, whose delivery he had listened to, and doing it with the fulness and accuracy of a stenographic report. His early performances of this kind, while showing the character and strength of this faculty, indicated what it was afterwards to become when practice and cultivation had given it fuller development.

A pleasant anecdote connected with this period, and with the earnest and somewhat too conscientious heed which he gave to the Sunday service, is told of him, and is well worth being related. The Baptist preacher, in a sermon aimed at worldly fashions, took occasion to inveigh sharply against a peculiar cushion head-dress of grotesque appearance then coming into fashion, and which the younger women of the parish had begun to introduce. The pulpit Boanerges hotly denounced the article as a device of the devil, appearing there to beguile the unstable, and lead them astray into crooked and ruinous ways. He exhorted his hearers to beware of this insidious foe, to set their faces as a flint against its entrance into their families, or, if unhappily it had got in, at once and at all hazards to cast it out and destroy it, as they valued their own safety and that of their households. Young Eliphalet was much impressed by the preacher's pointed appeals, and soon gave evidence of their practical effect upon *him.* He recollected that one of his sisters had contrived to get possession of this perilous article of apparel, wearing it at times, and, in her anxiety for its safety, keeping it carefully put away in a certain private nook in her little chamber. He at once went to the spot, drew forth the beguiling thing and tore it into fragments, which were scattered about the floor. The ruin was speedily discovered. A great feminine outcry was raised; the justice of the mother was appealed to; the culprit was duly arraigned; confessed, but pleaded in justification the preacher's lessons and his own convictions of duty. Spite of the plea, the offence brought a sound maternal chastisement upon him; the justice of which, however, under the circumstances, he ever afterwards denied.

Until he had become eight years of age, Eliphalet remained at his father's house, rendering such services as his strength permitted, and enjoying still the benefit of his mother's instructions. About this period he was separated from her for the first time, and sent to pass a winter with a married sister living at Hartland, some forty miles distant from Ashford. Returning in the spring, an offer awaited him from his brother Samuel, who had been installed, not long before, as pastor of the Congregational Church of Franklin, Connecticut. To relieve his struggling parents, Samuel agreed to take Eliphalet and his sister Deborah, three or four years his senior, and give them a home in his family. The minister had purchased, with his house, a small farm, and received from his people a salary of $333.34 a year, which he found it desirable to increase somewhat, by taking a few boys into his family, to fit for college. Eliphalet did not remain more than a year or two at his brother's house. Samuel Nott, though a conscientious man, and excellent pastor, was a rigid disciplinarian, and perhaps did not quite understand the character and temper of his little brother. It is certain that the sensitive spirit of the latter was chafed by restraints and exactions, which were looked upon as an arbitrary exercise of authority, and at the prompting of some real or imaginary wrong, Eliphalet abruptly left his brother's house, resolving to go to sea. He was soon induced, however, to abandon a purpose conceived without due reflection, and, after a brief interval, to return to the paternal home. Here he remained, pursuing his studies diligently, with such helps as were within his reach, aided especially, as he had been from his first attempts to learn, by his mother's guidance and wisdom, until death robbed him of this best of teachers and truest of friends.

Within a year of his return from his brother's, an incident occurred which promised to result in marking out for him a profession different from the one subsequently chosen. While hoeing in a field one day, he saw approaching Dr. Palmer, the physician of the region. Moved by long-cherished ambition to rise above his present lot, and secure the advantages of a higher education, as well as a wider theatre of action, he suddenly left his hoe, sprang over the fence, and abruptly accosted the doctor with "Won't you make a doctor of me?" "Not now, my little man," was the good-natured response; "but if you study hard, and go on improving till you are a few years older, and then come to me, I will make you a doctor." The promise pleased the boy. With this prospect before him, he gave renewed diligence to his studies, and, at length, at the age of fourteen, formally presented himself as a student of medicine. He was received in this character into Dr. Palmer's office. He devoted himself with energy to his preparatory work, and was making satisfactory progress, when a circumstance took place which evinced that the *rôle* of a physician was one for which destiny had not intended him. Dr. Palmer requested him one day to act as assistant in a surgical operation—the removal of a large tumor from the breast of a woman. The patient bore her suffering bravely, but the assistant was quite unnerved by the spectacle. He was seized with a sudden shuddering, and fell fainting on the floor. This ended his course in the direction of medicine and surgery. He abandoned it forthwith, concluding that he had not nerves strong enough to undergo the trying ordeals that this responsible profession often demands of those devoted to its service.

Within a year from this time his mother died. Mrs. Nott's health had been failing for several years, and toward the last had rapidly declined. The burdens of life had grown heavier than she could bear. Her mind became despondent as her physical energies decayed. She was quiet and silent, sitting for hours without having her attention aroused by surrounding objects, and receiving from those about her the gentle ministry that a child requires. She continued thus till, on the 24th of October, 1778, death came for her relief and rest. Her remains were laid in the rural burial-ground near Ashford. Of the mourners gathered at her grave, and who had loved her for the virtues that made her life a beauty and a blessing, none felt the bitterness of separation so acutely as the son, whose welfare had been the object of such unwearying devotion. "The light of my young life went out when my mother died," he was often heard to say, when referring to his loss and the pangs it occasioned. The place where she lay, which he loved in after years to visit, was to him hallowed ground; the influence of her life and counsels ever making his own life more hopeful, trustful, and brave.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE AT FRANKLIN.

Rev. Samuel Nott—His struggles for an education—Licensed to preach—Settles at Franklin—Eliphalet becomes his pupil—Teaches school at Franklin—His method of teaching—His principle of governing explained—Curious church trial at Franklin—Its incidents and results—Becomes Principal of Plainfield Academy—Testimonial—Dr. Joel Benedict—Eliphalet's relations to him—Enters Brown University.

SAMUEL NOTT had been the pastor of the Congregational Church of Franklin about six years, when his brother Eliphalet, on the death of their mother, became a second time an inmate of his house. The parents of Samuel, during the first and prosperous years of their married life, had designed to give him a college education. Rev. Abraham Nott had left his library to this grandson, hoping that he would choose, and be duly trained for, the profession of the ministry. The misfortunes of the family seemed to render this an utterly vain hope. A short attendance, and at long intervals, on some country district school, promised to fill out the entire measure of his educational advantages. His services, moreover, were required by his parents to help out the slender resources on which the family depended, and even the little time that he had been able to spare for school was now taken up with these household needs. In the narrative before referred to he has recounted, with minute detail, the difficulties which at this time beset every step of his way, what expedients he tried, to better his fortunes and lighten the burden which lay so heavily on his parents. At various times he had been blacksmith's apprentice, shoemaker, mason, and farm-laborer. He had peddled books and pamphlets, and even trinkets, about the country. At last he had been solicited, in a certain neighborhood where he was staying for a night, to fill a vacancy in the district school. This he undertook for two months, though feeling real misgivings as to his qualifications for the work. Conscious how little he had learned, he feared that some of his scholars might discover that they knew more than their teacher. Having passed an examination, which the little learning of his examiners made rather an easy feat,* he launched forth courageously on his new enterprise. By carefully studying beforehand the lessons of each day, he was able to keep in advance of his scholars, and really made a creditable figure as a pedagogue. The pay, it is true, was not princely, being only four dollars a month; and this sum, small as it was and great as his own needs were, the young teacher, with affectionate regard for the wants of his parents, made over for their benefit.

This was a turning point in Samuel's career. He felt, while thus engaged, the first strong craving for wider knowledge. A college education, and the advantages to flow from it, rose before him with irresistible attraction. The more he pondered the matter, the stronger became his longing for a liberal education. He determined to set out for a far remote and almost unattainable goal. He broached the matter to his parents, stated his yearning and his resolves. In view of the obstacles that may well have appeared to them insurmountable, they rather discouraged the project. Besides this, they did not know how to spare his services. He was determined, however, to attempt what he had set his heart upon achieving. Without giving in detail an account of the struggles through which he passed, it will suffice to say, that he found a friend in his extremity, whose kindly counsels and encouraging words were of essential service. This was the Rev. Daniel Welsh of Mansfield, through whose timely and generous patronage, directing his own resolute purpose, he was enabled to go forward in his preparatory training. He entered the Freshman Class of Yale College in 1776, teaching a school in New Haven as a means of support while pursuing his studies. He graduated with credit in 1780, having completed the full collegiate term; studied divinity under Rev. Jonathan Edwards, then a pastor in New Haven, received license to preach in 1781, and began his ministerial labors soon afterwards, as a supply to a church in Bridgehampton, Long Island. The same year he returned to Connecticut, being invited to preach in the Congregational Church of Franklin, to which he was called after a few months' probationary service. On March 13, 1782, he was formally ordained, and installed as the pastor of the church. The connection thus formed was destined to last till the death of Mr. Nott, which occurred May 26, 1852, in the ninety-ninth year of his age, and the seventy-first of his pastorate. Until five years before his death he performed his regular parochial duties, and not till 1849 was he completely relieved by having a colleague associated with him. A pastoral life-service so protracted and sustained, stands almost without a parallel.

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* "I acquitted myself in this examination very well, in the view of the *judge*, who was not a *very learned man*. He immediately engaged me at *four dollars* a month, which he thought was a generous price for a new beginner. Some persons taught for three! I was to begin the school the Monday following."—*Samuel Nott's Autobiography*, p. 61.

The record of this successful struggle reflects credit on Mr. Nott's character. It exhibits the possession of sterling moral qualities controlled by high principle. Nor did he afterward disappoint the good hopes to which his perseverance had given rise. He proved himself a laborious and faithful servant of God. His worth continued to make him esteemed not only by his own people, but by those of the surrounding region. In his experience as a teacher, he had learned the importance of discipline, and loved to hold the reins with a firm hand, in church as well as in school. He was ever a pattern of punctuality. His manners, too, were dignified and courtly, and his practical knowledge of affairs, together with his aptness for governing deliberative bodies, caused his services as presiding officer of such assemblies to be often called in requisition. At the close of his long ministry, the respect due to his venerable age was heightened by the excellent character he had maintained, and by the useful services he had rendered to the church.

Samuel Nott was therefore a skilled and well-furnished teacher at the time that Eliphalet came back to Franklin. The latter was now to be an inmate of his brother's house about five years, the most of which were to be devoted to study, mainly under Samuel's direction. These hours of study he alternated with such labors on his brother's farm (for Samuel was a land-holder on a moderate scale) as he was called upon to render. Several pupils shared with him the benefits of the clergyman's instructions, and helped to eke out the slender stipend which the latter received from his flock. During these years Eliphalet applied himself vigorously to his tasks. His progress in classical, mathematical, and other studies, was such as to draw frequent encomiums from his teacher, who had a high sense of what constituted scholarly excellence, and was not apt to err on the side of a too lenient judgment. He speaks of Eliphalet's studious habits, the facility with which he mastered his lessons, the rapid progress he made in knowledge of various kinds, and of his correct deportment in all respects. About a year after his return to Franklin, being then sixteen years old, he made a public profession of religion, becoming a member of his brother's church. It is probable that before this time his mind had been directed to the Christian ministry as a profession ; but his purpose was now fixed, and his studies, from this time forward, were pursued with the sacred office kept constantly in view.

During a portion of the time that Eliphalet passed in Franklin, he was himself a teacher. He found it necessary to do something toward his own support, and probably he felt a strong predilection to engage in a work to which the best years of his life were to be devoted. He taught for several terms in Franklin or its vicinity, carrying on at the same time his studies under his brother's direction. While he pursued the latter with ardor and success, his services in the former work were very acceptably rendered. Referring to the young teacher's school operations at this period, Samuel Nott says: "Eliphalet's education was so far advanced, and his reputation so good as a teacher in the common schools which he had several times kept, that he was appointed Principal of Plainfield Academy." From this testimony it appears, that though Eliphalet had not attained his twentieth year, he knew so well what were the work and duties of a teacher, and so fitly discharged these duties, as to receive the popular approval. It appears, too, that his reputation for excellence acquired here, led to his promotion elsewhere to a similar position, but one requiring a higher grade of knowledge and capacity.

His early experience as a teacher was fruitful of good to himself, as well as to the children under his charge. It served to open to him his own capabilities, to give shape and direction to certain undefined purposes in regard to his life-work. On this obscure field, and at this unripe age, he displayed a clear perception, a comprehensive view of the nature of a teacher's work, and of the true relation between teacher and pupil. He showed also a rare insight into the just mode of awakening interest in study, and of applying this stimulus to draw forth the learner's best exertions. He had also formed ideas in regard to the best method of maintaining discipline, as well as securing diligence and proficiency. He did not exact obedience by harsh and arbitrary measures, but rather won it by fostering the learner's self-respect, gaining his confidence, and inspiring him with good will and affection. In his theory thus outlined, and which he now first undertook to practise, he boldly cut loose from the prevailing routine, striking out for himself a course, which, if not absolutely original, was yet new for the period and the region. It was a course deliberately chosen, successfully followed in his first educational attempts, and ever afterwards adhered to with the happiest results.

In 1860, President Nott, while on a visit to Philadelphia, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, dictated to a young friend a paper referring to his first experiences as a teacher, and stating the reasons which led him to adopt "moral motives" in his government of the young, and to adhere to this rule through life. It is especially interesting as exhibiting at how early a period in his life he had formed his conclusions as to the true methods of governing. The paper treats, in part, of a time when the writer had become eminent as an educator; but the reader will be pleased, no doubt, to see Dr. Nott's views on this subject presented entire, even though the statement anticipates the order of the narrative:

"PHILADELPHIA, December, 1860.

"When I was a boy, seventy-five or eighty years ago, in good old Puritan Connecticut, it was *felt* as a practical maxim that 'To spare the rod was to spoil the child.' On this maxim the pedagogue acted in the school-room. He applied it for every offence, real or imaginary, and for having been whipped at school by the relentless master, the unfortunate tyro was often again whipped at home by his no less relentless father; so that between these two stern executors of justice, few children, I believe, were spoiled by the withholding of this orthodox discipline. For myself, I can say (and I do not think I was wayward beyond the average of children), that when at Franklin, if I was not whipped more than three times a week, and this in addition to warnings and admonitions daily, I considered myself for the time peculiarly fortunate.

"Being of a contemplative and forbearing disposition, this discipline of the rod became peculiarly irksome to me, and as I thought it was unjust, I formed a resolution that if I lived to be a man I would not be like other men in regard to the treatment of children.

"Through the mercy of God I did live to be a man, and at the age of seventeen I became installed as master of a district school in the eastern part of Franklin, Connecticut—a school where rebellious pupils had previously asserted their rights and been subdued or driven from the school by the use of the rod.

"Nothing daunted, I made up my mind to substitute moral motives in place of the rod—and so I frankly told my assembled pupils, adding that if they would second my efforts, they would secure to themselves, and yield to me and their parents, the happiness which is the heaven-appointed reward of well-doing.

"The school responded to my appeal, and thereafter we enjoyed ourselves together as equals in play hours, and on Saturday afternoons, which were also devoted to recreation. The moment I entered the school-room, subordination and application to study were so observable, that it became matter of admiration and remark among the inhabitants of the district. It extended even to the adjoining towns, so that the examination and exhibition with which the school closed, the ensuing spring, called together clergymen and other officials from places quite remote.

"This success brought me to the knowledge of the trustees of the Plainfield Academy, one of the most important, if not, at the time, the most important academy in the State. By a unanimous vote, I was appointed principal of that academy, an institution in which several hundred children, of both sexes, were, in the same building, successfully taught and governed for two years without the use of the rod;—it being, at that time, the prevailing usage, both in district schools and in academies, for the two sexes to be taught together in the same room, and subjected to the same form of government. This successful experiment in the use of moral suason, and of other kindred and kindly influences, in place of the rod, led to similar experiments, until, whether for the better or for the worse, the severer method at length came to occupy a very subordinate place in the system of school. education.

"As in those days the rod was the principal instrument in common school education, so when I was afterwards called to Union College, fines, suspensions, and expulsions were the principal instruments of college government. The Faculty sat in their robes as a court; caused offenders to be brought before them; examined witnesses, and pronounced sentences with the solemnity of other courts of justice, and though Union College had on its catalogue but a very diminutive number of students, this sitting of the Faculty as a court occupied no inconsiderable part of the time of its president and professors.

"Soon after I became connected with the college as its president, a case of discipline occurred, which led to the trial, and issued in the expulsion of a student belonging to a very respectable family in the city of Albany. According to the charter of Union College, the sentence of the faculty was not final. An appeal could be taken to the Board of Trustees. In the case in question, an appeal was so taken,

and after keeping college in confusion for months, by the different hearings of the case, the trustees reversed the decision of the Faculty, and restored the young man. On the event of this restoration I informed the board that they should never again, during my administration, have occasion to review another case of discipline by the Faculty ; and through the fifty-six years which have since passed, I have kept my word. Though we have been less successful in our system of parental government than could be wished, we have had no rebellions, and it is conceded, I believe, generally, that quite as large a proportion of our young men have succeeded in life, as of any other collegiate institution in the Union.

" Among the trials to which we have been subjected, is the introduction of secret societies. Many of the colleges in the New England and Middle States determined to suppress them, and in this determination Union College has been invited to unite. But foreseeing the difficulties which must be met in discovering the existence, and securing the abolition of secret associations, we concluded to make the attempt to render them instruments of government. In doing this, each society, as recognized, was required to have a regular or honorary member of the society in the existing faculty, and also a committee appointed by its president, whose duty it should be to consult and coöperate with the president of the college, in relation to any of its members who might be becoming remiss in study, or irregular in conduct. On the other hand, it was understood that the president should not send away any of their members till they had been reported to the society, and the society had failed to secure their reformation.

" It was indeed an experiment ; but it was hopeful in prospect, and proved useful.

The life of young Nott, as a member of his brother's family and church, was regular and uniform, with little of personal incident to diversify it. One event, however, occurred toward the close of his career in Franklin, which had not only a special interest for himself, but for the whole community, who found themselves excited by it in an unwonted degree. The facts of the case, which, as involving important consequences to Eliphalet's good name and success in life, deserve to be distinctly stated, are substantially these. He and a young fellow-student named David Mason, then fitting for college under Rev. Samuel Nott, were so unfortunate as to offend grievously certain parties in the Franklin Society. The ground of the offence was this. Disapproving of certain freedoms which marked the social intercourse of the young people of Franklin, and which they regarded as infringing upon the delicacy proper to be observed by one sex toward the other, they inveighed in strong terms against what their nice sense of propriety condemned. Nothing directly criminal was alleged in these freedoms, but Mr. Nott and his friend denounced them as indecorums, unjustifiable in themselves, and injurious in their tendency, both to the good name of the persons implicated and to the interests of society. A great commotion sprang up. The persons arraigned moved in respectable circles ; they were mostly members of the church, and they, with their friends, warmly resented the aspersion thus openly cast upon them. Special indignation was felt toward Mr. Nott, he being a member of his brother's church, and having, it was said, besides expressing his sentiments upon the alleged improprieties in the most direct manner, written and caused to be circulated a poetical satire, in which the offending parties were held up to ridicule and scorn.

The matter soon occupied a large share of the public attention and came to have a serious look. Charges to the number of five, with specifications alleging tale-bearing, equivocation, falsehood, the spreading of injurious reports, etc., were drawn up against Eliphalet, and formally presented for action. The honest pastor found himself in an embarrassing position. He saw that the difficulty was too grave to be adjusted by a private settlement, and that a public hearing before the society was unavoidable. From his relations to the accused party he decided to remain entirely neutral, and recommended the calling in of the Rev. Mr. Stone of Goshen, reputed to be a man of sound judgment and excellent spirit, to act as moderator. This was accordingly done. The hearing of the case proceeded, in presence of a council of ministers called for the purpose, and of an anxious and excited throng of spectators. The trial lasted several days, a large number of witnesses being present to testify, and each specification being thoroughly sifted. Eliphalet managed his own case, feeling quite sufficient to defend himself against allegations which he knew to be unjust. The result fully justified his confidence. Of the five charges brought against him, "two were given up by the accusers themselves," while in regard to the remaining three, the council pronounced them "not supported in manner and form as charged in the complaint." The whole matter of offence resolved itself into "some juvenile indiscretions in speaking of and treating the character of the young people of the place." After an "admonition to greater watchfulness and circumspection," the council thus concluded: "We are ready and most anxious to receive our young brother Eliphalet Nott to our sincere friendship and Christian communion, upon his manifesting a cordial compliance with the foregoing resolution." The verdict was cordially accepted by the admonished party, who thanked the church for their attention, and frankly acknowledged that, in some of the matters alleged against him, he had not been as careful as he might and should have been, to avoid giving any offence.

This decision did not quite please a few who had been most active in the prosecution. They withdrew from the church, showing a contumacious spirit for two or three years, notwithstanding various efforts made to reconcile them. At length, on December 15, 1793, a council of eight ministers and as many lay delegates met at Franklin, called specially to consider the case of the disaffected. The result was that the non-communing members engaged to return to their duty, which they presently did, and the long and painful difficulty came to an end.

Samuel Nott has recorded in his personal memoir that "his brother, notwithstanding all the efforts against him, immediately rose in public esteem." The confidence of the people was shown in their continuing to intrust their children to his care. His reputation as a teacher of more than ordinary gifts and skill was high in the town, and had spread to other districts. The trial, with its propitious close, strengthened the popular favor with which he was regarded. His being invited to take charge of the Plainfield Academy was, in part, an effect of this. The esteem in which he was held in Franklin, both as a teacher and a man, appears from the certificate and recommendation given him by the selectmen of this place, when he closed his services there and was about to enter on his new field of labor. This testimonial may have an interest for the reader. It runs in these words :

TO THE PROPRIETORS OF THE SCHOOL AT PLAINFIELD,
AND ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This may certify that Mr. Eliphalet Nott of Franklin is a young gentleman of unblemished moral and religious character, and that he hath taught, in said town, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and several branches of the mathematics, with uncommon success. He has gained the love of his pupils, together with the universal esteem and respect of his employers. With his knowledge of the languages we are not acquainted, and can only say, that from our acquaintance with the man, and his instructor, we presume it is good. However, we can with propriety recommend Mr. Nott to you, sirs, as a man of ability, possessed of a happy talent in forming the young mind ; as one who is worthy of your employ, and in whose integrity you may safely confide.

Selectmen { NATHAN LORD, ESQ.
NATHANIEL HYDE, M. D.
ANDREW HYDE.

PLAINFIELD, Sept. 30, 1793.

With this handsome record as to his qualifications for the work of teaching, and the success which had attended his efforts in Franklin, Mr. Nott removed to Plainfield, and soon entered on his duties in the academy. He was but little more than twenty years old, and found that, in his new position, the extent and quality of his attainments and his aptness to teach would be most severely tested. The languages, mathematics, and the higher branches of an English education, entered into the usual academical course. He had given close attention to these studies while in Franklin, and had made such progress in them that he felt himself not unfitted to meet these higher demands. He entered on his work with his wonted ardor, ready to devote his best energies to the interests of his pupils and the prosperity of the school. He succeeded here, as he had elsewhere, in winning the confidence and sympathy of his scholars, in awakening within them the desire to seek knowledge and an earnest purpose to secure it. He followed strictly the rule he had marked out for himself, of appealing to the pupil's own self-respect, to his sense of duty, rather than to his fear of punishment. Under the mild and sensible régime which marked his administration, good discipline was firmly maintained, and the academy rose in the public estimation on account of the skill and energy shown in its management. Its condition was such as to satisfy its numerous patrons, and especially those friends who had the deepest interest in its welfare.

Among the latter was the Rev. Joel Benedict, D. D., pastor of the Congregational Church of Plainfield. He was a clergyman thoroughly educated, and of a large and liberal spirit—a ripe scholar, an able theologian, a good preacher and pastor, a warm-hearted and genial Christian gentleman. His interest in education, and his influence in the community, had invested him with the trust of "Master of the Academy," as it was called; that is, he had the chief oversight of all its concerns. It was fortunate for the young teacher that he was thrown into close association with a man of such character and experience. Dr. Benedict, who had been influential in bringing Mr. Nott to Plainfield, had taken, it would seem, a special liking to the young "Rector" from his first acquaintance with him. The friendship thus formed was destined to last, without the least decay in its warmth and constancy, till the death of Dr. Benedict in 1816. During this interval a steady correspondence was kept up, exhibiting throughout the respect, confidence, and affection, which they entertained toward each other, and which grew stronger as the years rolled on. The bond indeed, which united them, was to be closer than that of mere friendship. Dr. Benedict was surrounded with an interesting family, whose society it was Mr. Nott's good fortune to enjoy from his first entrance into Plainfield. Several daughters, possessed of graces and accomplishments that had made them favorably known throughout the region, formed not the least interesting part of the household circle. The eldest of these, Sarah Maria, became, ere long, an object of special interest to Mr. Nott. The attachment was reciprocated, and the twain agreed, when the fitting time should come, to set out on the journey of life together. Eliphalet was thus to become a member of Dr. Benedict's household, and to share in the tender sentiments which are wont to spring from this near kinship.

His position in the academy was held for about a year and a half, during which time he pursued his studies with unflagging diligence. As he had decided upon preparing for the work of the ministry, he had paid much attention to theology under the direction of his future father-in-law. Having had the purpose to connect himself with Brown University, his studies had been pursued with the view of entering one of the advanced classes of this institution. But on repairing to Providence in May, 1795, shortly after his connection with the academy closed, he was induced somewhat to alter his plans. He appeared before the Faculty of Brown, and stated what his experience had been as a teacher, what attainments he had made in various branches, and what his purposes were in regard to the future. After hearing his statement, and giving him a careful examination, the faculty advised him to prosecute, during the summer, the studies of the Senior year, with a view to qualify himself to pass the usual Senior examination, and to be examined for a degree in the fall. This advice he followed; returned at the appointed time, was thoroughly examined by the faculty in all the branches with which candidates for graduation are presumed to be familiar, and was pronounced well fitted to receive the honors of the institution. But as he had not been formally connected with the college classes, he was not entitled to a diploma in the usual form. The substance, however, was secured. A testimonial to his attainments and desert was cordially given to him by the faculty of Brown, conferring upon him, in fact, the honorary degree of Master of Arts. His name is thus enrolled among the sons of this college, to whose wide and beneficent influence on the interests of society his own life-work contributed. The most honored among its presidents was one of his own pupils, and in afterwards giving Dr. Francis Wayland to Brown University, he amply repaid the institution for the kindness manifested to himself in his earlier years. To those familiar with university proceedings, it need not be said that the degree thus obtained was not only perfect in form, but more honorable, in fact, than though his examination had been preceded by years spent in the junior studies of the college course.

CHAPTER III.

SETTLEMENT IN CHERRY VALLEY.

Choice of a profession.—Is licensced as a preacher.—Declines settling in New England.—Decides to go as a Missionary to the Valley of the Susquehanna. —His marriage to Miss Benedict.—Sets out for his destined mission-field. —Incidents of his journey to Cherry Valley.—Judge Campbell's account of his settlement in Cherry Valley, and his labors there.

THE choice of a profession had been made by Mr. Nott several years before receiving this testimonial from the college faculty. It is probable that his purpose to devote himself to the Christian ministry was formed not long after he had made a public profession of his faith in Christ. It is certain that some time before he left Franklin, he had thus determined, and that his studies while there had been pursued with this object in view. Theological reading and study under his brother's direction, had received much of his attention. This work went on more earnestly during his two years at Plainfield, aided as he was by the learning and experience of Dr. Benedict. In the May following, he appeared before the Association of New London county. This body examined him carefully "in experimental, doctrinal, polemic, and practical divinity." He passed the ordeal creditably, and was recommended as "a man whose attainments and gifts fitted him to be invested with the sacred office." He was, accordingly, received under their care, preparatory to his being formally licensed to preach the Gospel. The licensure soon followed, bearing the date of June 26, 1796. It was given by a committee of the association, duly authorized, the document bearing the signature of Levi Hart, moderator of the meeting at which he had been examined.

With these credentials, he was not long in deciding upon his first field of labor. His attention had been for some time fixed upon the West, as having a stronger claim upon a young minister than his native State, or indeed New England, at that time presented. After carefully looking at the matter in every point of view, he concluded to visit New York State, a large part of whose territory, at the close of the last century, was but sparsely settled, and whose need of the preacher and the teacher was urgent. Having made up his mind, in the fear of God, he resolutely declined listening to inducements to stay where he was. Such inducements, indeed, were not wanting. After being licensed, he had preached for a short time to Connecticut parishes, one or two of which were anxious to secure his services as their pastor. Samuel Nott says, "He preached for awhile in this vicinity, to very general acceptance. New Salem would very gladly have settled him, but he chose to go into the State of New York." The choice, having been reached after much reflection, was not afterward to be shaken. The region toward which he was about to bend his steps, was to a great extent unsettled, though the stream of migration flowing largely from the Eastern States, had already begun to set strongly in that direction.

At the beginning of the present century, much of the fertile and beautiful region lying between the Hudson and the great lakes was little more than a wilderness. A few years were to witness a surprising transformation of these forests into fruitful fields, and these solitudes into cities, towns, and villages, swarming with an industrious and thrifty population. But the time for this great spectacle had not yet come. Even in the tracts lying just around Albany, the settlements were few and scattered. From several of these an earnest call came for the presence and labors both of the missionary and the teacher. He who should enter there in answer to this call, ready for hard and faithful service, might count upon being amply rewarded in the pleasure springing from self-denying discharge of duty, as well as in the fruits of the labors put forth to bless and elevate men.

The Domestic Missionary Society of Connecticut, on learning Mr. Nott's wish to undertake a mission to the State of New York, readily accepted his services, giving him a commission to go forth and labor in such part of the proposed field as Providence might open before him. The point to which his attention was specifically directed, was the region lying around the head waters of the Susquehanna. Several small settlements had sprung up here during the last century, and in some one of these it was expected that he would find a field with full and useful employment. Having declined every overture to settle in his native State, he became impatient to carry out his chosen project, and to begin operations in his distant and untried field. As did Abraham of old, he went forth into a strange country, "not knowing whither he went." But his confidence was strong that he would be guided in the right way, and would reach the right end.

Before turning his steps westward, he was married to Sarah Maria, eldest daughter of Dr. Benedict. The union was an auspicious one. The bride was pious, beautiful, and lovely in character. Her family warmly approved of her choice, and the pair, now beginning their wedded career, seemed entirely congenial to each other.

This event which took place on the 4th of July, 1796, did not delay Mr. Nott's departure for the scene of his proposed labors. Immediately after his marriage, he set out on his journey, leaving his wife at her father's house till he had found a home. His course lay through Hartford and Springfield to Albany, the last being at that time a staid Dutch town of but a few thousand inhabitants. Reaching here late in the afternoon, he concluded to remain overnight, finding accommodations in an inn kept by a Hollander named Bromley, who knew no language but his native Dutch. An amusing incident, connected with his lodging here, served to fix his first night in Albany somewhat firmly in his memory. A great fire, that was laid to the charge of incendiaries, had consumed a large amount of property but a few days before his arrival. The fears of the people were much excited ; and it was natural, perhaps, that the host, who showed these fears, should look with distrust and suspicion upon a stranger, who could not speak the language of the place. Having shown the traveller to his room, mine host coolly locked the door, and put the key into his pocket, confining his guest there like a prisoner in his cell, and not releasing him till long after the sun had risen.

Resuming his journey the next day, he passed through a densely wooded and rugged region, picturesque and wild, for much of the way, and standing as it sprang from the hand of nature. On the morning of the second day after leaving Albany, he came to the brow of the high hill overlooking Cherry Valley. This was a small village, though a settlement that had already become widely known in the history of Border Warfare, and was especially famous from its tragic association with Indian and Tory atrocities perpetrated during the war of the Revolution. The scene which burst upon the traveller, as he emerged from the wilderness, and beheld this fair valley lying beneath him, was one of surpassing loveliness, and the impression made upon him was never effaced. More than fifty years afterwards, Dr. Nott, in an address at Cherry Valley on an occasion of special interest to its citizens as being connected with the larger endowment of their academy, reverts to his first acquaintance with the region and to the circumstances of his arrival. The account he gives of this journey, and his personal experiences by the way, have an intrinsic interest, and serve, besides, to illustrate this period in his life.

> "It is now more than half a century since, young and inexperienced, I left my native State, to visit the few scattered settlements which indented the eastern margin of that great forest which constituted what was then known as Western New York. On my way I passed a night in Albany, then inhabited almost exclusively by Hol-

landers. . . . On the next morning, sad and solitary, I wended my uncertain way through a dense pine forest to the Five-Mile house, then kept by McKown. There, and on my way, I met with German teamsters, in great numbers, and only with German teamsters—men whose language I did not understand, and whose manners and bearing were such that, though I have many friends among them now, I then preferred solitude to their society.

"Learning from McKown that a road, known as the New State Road, was in process of construction, and nearly completed to its junction with the usually travelled road from the Mohawk River at Palatine to Otsego Lake, whither I was going, I resolved, though no traveller had as yet preceded me, to attempt to reach my destination through that unfinished route. At the close of my first day's travel I arrived at a shanty some seventeen miles distant from this place. Here, the only feed I could obtain for my horse was what the forest supplied, whilst a smoked herring, without bread, and without vegetables of any kind, constituted the only refreshment I could obtain for myself.

"On the forenoon of the second day, as I emerged from the dense forest which covered the summit of yon eastern hills, this beautiful valley, with its rich pasture grounds and golden harvest fields, ripe for the sickle, broke unexpectedly upon my view. I say unexpectedly, for though I had read of Cherry Valley, and of the massacre which occurred there during the revolutionary war, I was not aware that it had so far recovered from the ruin inflicted on it by its savage invaders, or that it was crossed by the solitary pathway I had been treading alone.

"It was while indulging in the sad reflection that I had passed the limit of civilization, and that nothing in the form of cultivated fields and village life existed beyond me, that this charming spot, so beautifully fringing the forest, first met my eye. I checked my horse, and in amazement looked down upon it. It seemed like the vision of enchantment. And though fifty-five years have since gone by, I remember the mingled emotions of joy and gratitude with which, after such a dreary journey, I descended yon hillside, and entered the then thriving village. What an exchange it was for the gloom of the forest, where at, intervals, the howl of the wolf fell upon my ear, and where, a short time thereafter, a traveller was devoured by these ferocious animals! The first person I met appeared like an acquaintance, while it seemed like a new joy that all spoke the same language, and professed the same religion as myself.

"My heart went forth to them. The affection I felt was warmly reciprocated, and though I could not, as requested, remain with them at first, I promised to return. After fulfilling the mission with which I was charged, I did return, and coöperated in founding that school of science, whose interests and whose range of influence we have met this day to further and extend."

This spot, which had such fascinations for him, was really to be the theatre of most of his labors in this region, both as preacher and teacher. His actual destination was a few miles beyond; and thither he proceeded according to the terms of his commission. But a call soon followed him from the Presbyterian Church of Cherry Valley, and, within two months of his first visit, he had returned, to cast in his lot with the people, and to make the place his home. His stay among them was not, indeed, to continue long. But his labors, though brief, were to be extremely important to the community, and their beneficent influence upon morals, upon education, and upon the general welfare, were to reach out far into the years that followed. What Cherry Valley was at this time, the character and condition of the settlement, the sufferings which the war had inflicted on its people, the circumstances under which Mr. Nott came to it and was led to make it his home, the nature and results of his work there, the sentiments with which the people regarded him, and the services he rendered, are pleasantly and graphically told by the Hon. William W. Campbell. This gentleman, so well known, is a native of the valley, and his familiarity with the early history * of the region, together with his intimate, lifelong relations to Dr. Nott, give to his statements very high authority. Though the narrative furnished by Judge Campbell anticipates, in some of its details, a period in the life of Dr. Nott which is to receive a fuller survey elsewhere, still the personal incidents connected with his residence in the valley, together with the

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* Judge Campbell is the author of the "Annals of Tryon county, or Border Warfare of New York," a work published in 1831; a second edition of which appeared in 1849. It is a volume abounding with useful information, and as illustrating especially the history of a wide and important section of the State, is of much historical value.

whole account of his services there, and of the region itself, have interest enough, and relevance enough, to warrant us in giving to the reader the narrative entire, and in the words of the writer.

"It was in the autumn of 1796, that Eliphalet Nott, having left New England on a missionary tour to the country on the head waters of the Susquehanna, and beyond and around Otsego Lake, arrived at Cherry Valley. The Valley of the Mohawk, as far up as the German Flats, and the Valley of the Schoharie, had been settled by the Germans, principally German Palatinates, early in the last century. Cherry Valley had been settled by a small colony of Scotch Irish Presbyterians as early as 1740. There were a few detached settlements lower down the Susquehanna Valley, and westward, prior to the revolutionary war. But the whole region was overrun and laid waste during that war, and, at its close, there was not an inhabitant remaining, or a house left. At the close of the revolution, those of the former inhabitants who survived began to return. Then, and indeed from the commencement of the settlement, the course of trade was up the Mohawk River to the place where is now the village of Canajoharie, and thence northward, over the intervening highlands, to the head waters of the Susquehanna. But after the war, there was a rapid increase of population in what is now the county of Otsego; a more direct communication with Albany was demanded, and charters for turnpikes were obtained. Foremost among them was that of the first western turnpike, popularly known as the Cherry Valley turnpike, extending from Albany in a nearly direct line to Cherry Valley, fifty-two miles. By this route Eliphalet Nott came through on horseback, and was one of the first, if not the first, of its travellers. For though the road had been laid out, and cut through, it had not been sufficiently worked for general travel. The country, for a considerable distance east of Cherry Valley, and indeed most of the high and rolling country across to the Schoharie, was only partially settled, and for many miles the new turnpike had been cut out through a heavy-timbered region. It was then a stony, rough, half-worked road, abounding with stumps and mud-holes, over which the young clergyman had been slowly making his way, hardly able to procure the least refreshment for himself or his horse. Near the close of the day he reached the summit of the hill where the road turns and winds down to the valley. This valley had then been settled for half a century. The desolations of war had disappeared during the ten years since the return of the inhabitants. The sun just sinking behind the western hills shed a mellow light on meadows and green fields, and farm-houses nestling amid apple orchards, presenting to the eye of the weary traveller a scene of tranquil rural beauty, which seems to have impressed him so much that it never faded from his memory. A few years before his death, and during his last visit to Cherry Valley, Dr. Nott was a guest at my house, which, at the time of his first arrival at Cherry Valley, was the residence of my grandfather, Colonel Samuel Campbell, and where the doctor first made his home. Sitting on the piazza on a bright summer afternoon, looking down the valley, the associations of other days seemed to crowd upon his memory, and he expressed a strong wish to go to the spot where his eyes first rested on the same landscape more than sixty years before. I drove him to the place. It was nearly the same hour, the wooded hills were but little changed, the afternoon sun was tinging the tree-tops and casting its light down the valley as in days long gone by. There were more houses, but still the general outlines were the same. Long did he gaze and peer through his closing hands, as if to shut out portions of the light. Nothing was said to interrupt his thoughts. At length he said, 'I have got it,' 'I have got it,' and then sank back on the cushions in silence. Slowly we drove down the hill and reached home at sunset. It was the last night of the good old man at Cherry Valley. What tender memories: recollections of friends, of his early manhood, and of events long gone by, followed each other in rapid succession, during that last long look on the hillside, can only be imagined by those who were familiar with this warm and sympathetic nature.

"The first settlement of Cherry Valley was in 1740; and, in 1741 came in the principal members who first organized society in what was then a wilderness. With the first settlers came also the Rev. Samuel Dunlop as their minister. He had been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was a scholarly man. His flock were composed almost entirely of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, some of whom were sons of men who had fought for the Protestant cause at the siege of Derry, and who brought to the New World a love of learning and liberty as well as of the Protestant religion. A Presbyterian church was at once organized, and soon after a classical school was opened by the Rev. Mr. Dunlop. Many of the men prominent on the frontiers in after years, especially the sons of wealthy Germans in the valley of the Mohawk, were educated by him. This was the first church where there was preaching in the English language, and the first English classical school in New York west of the immediate settlements on the banks of the Hudson. For thirty-five years the settlers prospered; but the growth of the place was slow, owing to the difficulty of access in those days, and to the dense, heavy forests which had to be hewn down in order to bring the land into cultivation. The war of the revolution swept away all the inhabitants. The firebrand and tomahawk of the Indian destroyed both property and people. The survivors began to return in 1783, at the close of the war, and commenced to rebuild their dwellings. They called a public meeting in what they termed the meeting-house yard; and there, with their feet upon their fathers' graves, they incorporated themselves under the general religious incorporation act as a church, declaring that it should be the First Presbyterian Church of the town of Cherry Valley forever!

"When Rev. Mr. Nott arrived, they had built a new, but old-fashioned, square wooden meeting-house with its square, high-backed pews, and had also erected a large, commodious building for an academy. There had been as yet no regular, settled pastor. Good old Dominie Dunlop had died in exile during the war. The massacre of a large number of his family by the Indians preyed upon his mind, and no doubt hastened his death. The Rev. Solomon Spaulding, the reputed author of the Mormon Bible, or rather of a novel in which he undertook to show that the American Indians were the descendants of the Lost Tribes (the manuscript of which afterwards came into the possession of the famous Joseph Smith, and constituted the Golden Leaves), had been preaching for a time and teaching in the new academy. But pulpit and academy were both vacant when the young Connecticut missionary first looked down on the valley on that pleasant summer afternoon. Such was the location, and such, in brief, was the history of the people, when he who was destined to become one of the most eminent pulpit orators, and the most successful educator of his time, was to commence his career in both capacities.

"After a few excursions made by him to the neighboring settlement, the church and congregation of Cherry Valley gave him an unanimous call to settle with them as their pastor.*

"The congregation was still weak, and the pecuniary means of a people who had only recently commenced, as it were, anew, to provide the necessaries and comforts of life for their families, did not warrant the payment of a large salary. In addition to his labors as a pastor, he took charge of the academic school, and commenced † that career as an instructor of youth, in which in after years he achieved such wonderful success. The school flourished under his charge.

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* The call and acceptance, with the accompanying proceedings, as given by Judge Campbell, possess a general as well as a local interest; but it must be among the matter left out, to prevent the too great size of the volume.

† This is not quite accurate, as his "career as an instructor of youth" began, as has been seen, before he left his native State.

From that time, in fact, it became a most important institution of learning, continuing to flourish after he left, and maintaining the high reputation he had given it, during the greater part of his life. Indeed, throughout his long presidency of Union College, it continued to be a training school for that institution. Only in rare instances did a young man fitted for college think it possible for him to go elsewhere for his education. To prepare young men for the active duties of life in a new country, to wield an influence for good among a struggling, energetic people, was then, as in after life, Dr. Nott's great aim. Fully appreciating the importance of high scholarship, he was yet aware that in the short time which most young men, with limited resources, could devote to classical learning, there could be but few who could become eminent as scholars, while there would be many who might be prepared for great usefulness, and attain a good measure of success in the professions and in the walks of business life. The graces of oratory, the study of character, the kind of knowledge by which men are influenced and public opinion moulded for good and the right, were with him always prominent objects of thought, and in those matters his teachings were ever most successful.

"This old Cherry Valley Academy had a peculiar charm for him. He never forgot it; he never ceased to live for it, as well as for the people of his charge, to whom at that early day he ministered as their pastor. More than half a century after, he made a special visit, at the request of the people, to aid in the raising of funds to enlarge the academy building, and fit it for more extended usefulness. I was then residing in the city of New York, and, at his invitation, accompanied him to Cherry Valley. The scene in the church was one never to be forgotten. A platform had been erected in front of the pulpit, where the trustees and others were seated. Dr. Nott, then most venerable in appearance, bearing the dignity of high renown, and far advanced in years, though with intellect still vigorous and unclouded, arose to speak. After looking around for a minute or two on the congregation, and when all was painfully still, he said: "I feel to-day that I am like an old soldier, long returned from the wars, and who can only shoulder his crutch and show how fields were won. In looking over this assembly I can see only here and there a gray head, the feeble remnant of those among whom I labored, as preacher and as teacher, more than half a century ago. A new generation has come on the stage, with whose liberality in giving, with whose devotion to the cause of learning, I am not acquainted, but if I had your fathers as auditors to-day I should know on whom I could depend." Such was the opening of his address. The tact as well as feeling of the old man eloquent may readily be seen. The victory was won. Men went out from the assembly with their purse-strings loosed, exclaiming, "Nothing further need be said, the money must be contributed", and so it was.

"Soon after his settlement in Cherry Valley he went back to Connecticut, and on his return brought with him his young wife, who by her amiable disposition and charming manners, soon won the affections of the people of his charge. His oldest son Joel, afterwards a Professor in Union College, was born in Cherry Valley. For about two years he labored with great success. His fame as a pulpit orator had early gone abroad, and at the expiration of this time he was called to a wider field of labor in the city of Albany. I have already remarked that Dr. Nott always retained a warm affection for Cherry Valley, where he had commenced his active life, and where also his name and early labors were fresh and fragrant in the memories and traditions of her people. I visited him at Schenectady, a very short time before his death. He was then past the age of ninety-two; he was very feeble—the lamp of life had burned to the socket. Raising himself partially on his couch, he said, in a very low voice, that he would like to send a last message to the people of Cherry Valley; that he had not strength to utter his wishes, but do you say to them what you think I would say if I could address them personally. I returned home and delivered my message as well as I could. I saw him no more, till I helped to carry out all that was mortal of him, and lay him down to his last rest."

CHAPTER IV.

SETTLEMENT IN ALBANY.

Mr. Nott's work in Cherry Valley—His wife's influence and helpfulness—Failure of her health and removal to Ballston—Mr. Nott preaches in Albany, and is called to the First Presbyterian Church—John Blair Smith—His influence in introducing Mr. Nott to Albany—Letters concerning Dr. Smith—Mr. Nott ordained and installed there—First Presbyterian Church of Albany—Albany at the close of the last century—The Hollanders and their character—The Old Dutch Church—Other churches in Albany—New England settlers—Account of Mr. Nott by Gorham Worth—Character of his audiences, and influence of his preaching.

THE period of Mr. Nott's labors and residence in Cherry Valley was not far from two years. He found full employment in the duties of his pastorate, together with those which his connection with the academy imposed upon him. He spared no pains to make his work efficient and useful in both positions. The people attended on his public ministry with interest and profit, and the knowledge of him as a preacher of uncommon gifts soon spread through the surrounding region. He was popular, too, with the families of his charge. Those who gathered to hear him preach, confessed his power. In the household circle, too, he had the qualities which won favor from persons of all ages. His bearing was frank, his disposition genial, his address and manner captivating. Along with his happy faculty of ready and fitting utterance, he had also a tact which enabled him, without appearance of effort, to adapt his conversation to all individuals and occasions. This made him a delightful companion of youth. He was a favorite, even with children, as well as with those more advanced in years.

As a teacher, he practised the rules and methods which had given him success elsewhere. He sought to gain the good opinion and confidence of his pupils, to awaken interest in their studies, to inspire them with self-reliance, and to impress upon them that progress in study, solid attainment, and success in life through it, would be secured, not through books or teachers merely, but only through their own good efforts and energy. The discipline of his school was not relaxed through this persuasive mode of governing, and the academy flourished under his care. The foundation was laid for its becoming one of the best known and most successful institutions of the kind in the State, from which, for many following years, numbers of young men passed with credit to the higher training of a college, and thence to stations of usefulness in active life.

The labors of the preceptor and pastor, at this time, were severe, but they were borne in a buoyant spirit. He was young. He had a hopeful temperament. He had a becoming confidence in his own powers. He understood the influence of his work, and felt the responsibility resting on him to perform it well. The presence and aid of his amiable wife, whom he had brought from her father's house shortly after his settlement in Cherry Valley, contributed much to lighten his burdens and make his work more effective. Mrs. Nott's education, as well as character, fitted her for the new position on which she had now entered. Her personal attractions were remarkable. She was easy and unaffected in her manners, full of vivacity which made her the life of the social circle, quick at repartee, yet having the art of making those who were in her society feel unconstrained, and pleased with themselves. With all this, she had a sympathetic nature which prompted her to enter warmly into her husband's enterprises, to strengthen the influence of the church, and use every effort to elevate the society in which she dwelt. Her training and associations in her father's house had served to make her familiar with the requirements of her present position. The paternal care she had heretofore experienced was not withdrawn on her removal to a new home. Dr. Benedict followed her there, not only with good wishes and deep solicitude, but with practical counsels.

One of the letters written at this time from the father to the newly married daughter, may interest the reader, not only as a specimen of the purest paternal affection but for its hearty, sententious wisdom.

DR. BENEDICT'S SECOND LETTER TO HIS DAUGHTER.

"PLAINFIELD, CONNECTICUT, April 10, 1797.

"MY DEAR SALLY: Though you are gone from me, you are yet much in my thoughts. Parental affection suffers no diminution, and your welfare will ever be to me a matter of very great concern.

"I endeavor not to be anxious, but trust you to the care of your husband, depending on the Providence of that God who has kept me all my life long, and whose blessing alone can render my children happy.

"As you are setting out in life, accept a little advice from one whose experience may demand your attention, and the kindness of whose intentions you cannot doubt,

"Take care to set out well. That life may have a good course and end well, it must have a good beginning. Begin, then, with the fear of God. Let that be the root, and all the branches will be good.

"Seek the divine power, and rest upon it. It will give you safety, it will give you peace.

"The dictates of reason, the light of nature, the word of God, your own experience of good and evil, all demonstrate that a creature without the favor of his Maker must be wretched, and that under his smiles he must be blessed.

"'Seek, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all other things shall be added unto you.'

"In your treatment of others, endeavor to add to your friends, and make no one your enemy. A kind heart will lead to kind actions. Despise not the good-will of the meanest, for the time may come when it may be of the greatest service to you. On the other hand, the most contemptible enemy may wound you when you least expect it.

"Have a proper regard for the opinions of others. Never say 'I don't care what they think about me.' Consider well your place, the rank you may properly take, and regulate your conduct accordingly.

"If you would live pleasantly, take special care in the treatment of your husband. You have gained his affection, but that is not enough; be careful to preserve it. Love, if it have no food, will starve. There needs no art to preserve the affection of a worthy man.

"Render yourself valuable in your whole deportment, and he will set a value upon you; treat him with gentleness, with respect, and tenderness.

"Women have power over men, but nothing is more common than for them to mistake their weapons. Reproach, anger, and noise may drive a man from home, but a submissive sweetness and love will unlock every treasure, and command his heart. To be a good wife, look well to the affairs of your house. As to labor, it may be expected, but attention is indispensable. See that your dinner is well cooked, but do not fall out with your maid because it is ill done. It is better to bide than to blame.

"You will hear from me again. God help you, my dear child. May He make you wise and happy. To hear of your late illness gave me pain. I thank God that you are recovering. I commit you to His care.

"Your affectionate father,

"JOEL BENEDICT."

These are pleasant lessons, pleasantly conveyed.

The grave New England divine is no sentimental essayist. There is a touching pathos, as well as simplicity, in his lessons of wisdom; but they are derived from the Holy Scriptures. The picture before his mind is evidently that of the daughter of Israel, "the virtuous woman," so exquisitely drawn in the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She giveth a portion to her maidens, her candle goeth not out by night. Her husband is known in the gates; he sitteth among the chiefs of the land."

Mrs. Nott greatly endeared herself to the people of Cherry Valley by her affectionate heart, frank and simple manners, and unostentatious charities. Her residence here, however, was not destined to continue long. Her health became so seriously impaired after the birth of a son on December 14, 1797, as to resist, for a long time, all efforts to restore it. It was decided to have her try the waters of Ballston Springs, then already becoming celebrated, and she was taken there early in the summer of 1798, in a very enfeebled condition. After remaining several months at Ballston, she regained a good measure of her former strength. She did not, however, return to Cherry Valley. Circumstances had occurred during her absence at the Springs, to open for her husband another home. He had been summoned from his quiet country parish to a wider field of usefulness. During the same summer in which Mrs. Nott was seeking health at Ballston, a meeting of the Albany Presbytery, to which body Mr. Nott belonged, was held at Salem, Washington county. On his way to attend this meeting, the young clergyman reached Schenectady late in the afternoon, putting up for the night at an inn then standing at the corner of Union and Ferry streets. A religious meeting was to be held that evening near by, and the services were to be conducted by the Rev. John Blair Smith, president of Union College. Mr. Nott attended this meeting, became acquainted with President Smith, and out of this seemingly trivial circumstance sprang results which had a very important bearing upon his future life. In a letter written by him many years afterwards, and designed to furnish some account of the Life of President Smith, for Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit," this interview is given, with a recital of some of the consequences flowing from it. It is well to hear the story told in the words of him who had the fullest knowledge of the facts related.

"UNION COLLEGE, April 10, 1857.

"DEAR SIR: My acquaintance with Dr. John Blair Smith was short; my reminiscences of him are therefore few but precious, for they are reminiscences of a wise and good man, of a man who, during our too short acquaintance, ever treated me as a son, whose counsels gave a new direction to my opinions on church organization, and whose efforts determined the ultimate field of my labors.

"I came from the State of Connecticut in the summer of 1795, on a mission to the "new settlements" in Western New York, which, at that time could hardly be said to extend beyond Rome. Almost all farther West, and much this side of it, was a wilderness.

"My training had been in the Orthodox Congregational Church. My sympathies were with it, and so were my opinions in regard to church government. It was my purpose, and I desired it to be my duty, to extend its influence, and to form churches in the same connection.

"In passing through Schenectady, I stopped over night at a public-house opposite the academy building, then occupied by the college, and learned that there was to be a prayer meeting or lecture there that evening. I felt it my duty to attend, and was solicited to preach by Dr. Smith, then President of Union College, who, after service invited me to his house to spend the night. He inquired concerning my views and objects and theatre of action. Having told him, he said to me, "The Orthodox churches of New England hold substantially the same faith as the Presbyterians, of which the Shorter Catechism is the common symbol. Now this being the case, is it wise, is it Christian, to divide the sparse population holding the same faith, already scattered, and to be hereafter scattered, over this vast new territory, into two distinct ecclesiastical organizations, and thus prevent each from having those full means of grace, which both might much sooner enjoy but for such division? Would it not be happier for the entire church that those two divisions should make mutual concessions, and thus effect a common organization, on an accommodation plan, with a view to meet the condition of communities so situated?

"The arguments employed by Dr. Smith were deemed conclusive by me. They gave a new direction to my efforts, and led, through the influence of other Congregationalists whom I induced to coöperate, to the formation, on this plan, of those large Presbyterian churches, of which, though the plan has been abandoned, the fruits remain to the present day.

"When I came into the State of New York my fixed purpose was to settle in the country. From this Dr. Smith availed himself of every opportunity that presented to dissuade me. He urged on me the consideration of the fact that the Apostles always sought the great cities as centres of influence. He urged my settlement in the First, then the only Presbyterian Church in Albany; and it was owing to his untiring exertions, that I was finally settled in that city.

"Very truly yours,

"E. NOTT."

The preaching of Mr. Nott, on the occasion referred to had so favorably impressed President Smith that he seems to have regarded him at once as the proper man to take the charge of the First Presbyterian Church of Albany, whose pulpit was then vacant. He accordingly invited Mr. Nott to supply it, for the following Sabbath, on his return from Salem. Distrustful of his ability to perform satisfactorily the duties of such a field as the one that now presented itself to him, he, at first hesitated. He preferred a rural parish like the one he now held. He was quite satisfied with the character of his work, and had no wish to change it. The short time that he had labored there, the cordial regard of his people, the success which had attended his ministry, and the larger success which the future promised, seemed to forbid his removal. Dr. Smith, however, was ready to parry all objections to his proposal, and stated his own side of the question so cogently, that Mr. Nott finally yielded the point, and consented to occupy the Albany pulpit for the Sunday mentioned.

This was really one of the turning points in his career, showing, as is often shown in the lives of men who have achieved eminence and exercised a wide influence over other lives, how potential are slight circumstances, apparently, in shaping a man's course, and stamping the character of his life-work. He appeared before the Albany Church on the appointed day. His sermons made a great impression, the audience being fairly taken captive by his fervid and eloquent words. This was at once made manifest ; the popular wish to secure the young preacher's services being so strong, as to issue in a prompt invitation, made on the very next day, to become the pastor of the church. He remained and preached the following Sabbath, and was enabled, by a week's intercourse with the people, to learn their condition and the aspects of the field as a place of labor. He decided to assume the charge offered him, and to enter upon its duties with as little delay as possible. His arrangements for leaving Cherry Valley were soon made. The people there, though grieved to lose him, acquiesced in the propriety of his going, in view of the controlling reasons which demanded the change. Before the end of the summer he had removed to Albany, and begun his work, in a church which ranked among the most important in the Presbyterian body in the State, and whose demands upon a pastor's devoted service were, for various reasons, peculiarly exacting.

He was ordained by the Presbytery, October 13, 1798, several of the clergy of the Reformed Dutch, then regarded as almost the established church of Albany, joining in the imposition of hands. His installation as pastor took place at the same time. The audience was large, and the services deeply interesting. President Smith, whose urgency had done so much in bringing Mr. Nott before the people, and causing his settlement among them, preached the sermon, from II. Corinthians, iv. 1, 2: "Therefore, seeing we have received this ministry, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." It was a noble discourse, full of the inspiration of the text, and aglow with deep feeling growing out of an occasion so personally gratifying to the speaker.

The church of which Mr. Nott had now become the pastor was one of the oldest Presbyterian societies in the State. It was formed in 1763, just at the close of the French war, when the population of Albany had not reached three thousand souls. Prominent in numbers and influence among the early members and founders of the church, were the Scotch-Irish, the class of emigrants who had settled Cherry Valley, and had planted themselves at various other points in the region around Albany, and on the banks of the Hudson. They were stanch Presbyterians, deeply religious, and sure to impress their principles and character, on the communities among whom they dwelt. Where any considerable number of them had made a home for themselves, a church of their order and name was soon seen to arise, and the ordinances of religion, as they had been trained to hold and love them, were statedly administered. People from New England had also begun to settle at Albany, though the number at this time was small.* These, for the most part, affiliated with the Presbyterian society, as being on the whole most in accordance with the church in which they had been nurtured. The beginning indeed was small, but the congregation increased with the growth of the town, becoming within a few years a strong and influential body.

In 1763 a lot lying between Beaver, William, and Hudson streets, was conveyed by the corporation of the city to parties representing the Presbyterian Society.† On this site a plain wooden meeting-house was soon erected, large enough to accommodate the congregation for a number of years. As the edifice became too strait for the growing numbers, it was determined to build a larger and more commodious house of worship. This building, which was of brick, and is still standing at the corner of Pearl and Beaver streets, was begun in 1794 and opened for public worship on the 20th of November, 1796. Though a somewhat stately and imposing structure for its day, it is plain enough now, when compared with the superb sanctuaries which the larger wealth, the higher culture and taste, if not deeper religious sense, of the present times, appear to demand. The society continued to worship in this church till the 3d of March, 1850, when they removed into a more commodious and elegant building. The house they left passed into the hands of the Congregationalists, who have grown into a flourishing and vigorous society, and still occupy it as a house of worship.

From the organization of the Presbyterian Church to the opening of the Revolutionary war, the ministerial charge had been held by the Rev. William Hanna, succeeded by the Rev. Andrew Bay. The Rev. John McDonald was settled as its pastor in 1785, continuing in charge for a period of ten years. The Rev. Eliphalet Nott was its fourth pastor, and the first to perform regular services in the new sanctuary.

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* Mr. Elkanah Watson, one of the first New England settlers, and a man of mark and influence in his day, removed from Providence to Albany in 1789. At this time he says, "not more than five New England families were residents of the city." See "Worth's Recollections of Albany"—Note to page 33.

† Munsell's Annals, vol. 1.

The city contained at this time only four church edifices. Of these, the most spacious and elegant, and the most complete in all its appointments, was the Presbyterian. The new church edifice for the use of the Reformed Dutch congregation, though in course of erection at this time, was not finished till two or three years afterwards. This venerable church, one of the oldest in the country, has an interesting history of its own. As connected, however, with the earlier ecclesiastical organizations of the city, it deserves notice in a narrative in which the position and influence of any one of these churches are specially recorded.

At the close of the last century, Albany, though having the name of a city, was hardly more than a first-class village. Its entire population did not exceed eight thousand. Its growth, for the century and a half succeeding its first settlement, had been slow. The Hollanders who settled it in the early part of the seventeenth century, formed, at the beginning of the next, the main element of its population. They brought with them to their new home, the sturdy honesty, the resolute will, the industry, the courage, the constancy in pursuit of what they deemed a worthy purpose, the indomitable attachment to civil and religious liberty, for which the race had long been famous beyond the sea. Their love of schools and education was inbred and ineradicable. The church and the school, the teacher and the preacher, were terms never disconnected in the practical working of their social and religious system. The freedom which they had won, by sacrifices and sufferings so protracted as to be without a parallel in the history of the world, they labored not only to retain in its integrity, but so to diffuse that others might share its benefits. They rejoiced in being free themselves, and delighted to open their arms and their doors so as to make their country an asylum for the oppressed of every land.

This love of freedom which the Dutch brought with them to this country contributed to our liberal institutions a leavening influence for which the chief credit has been unduly given to others. The principles of the Declaration of 1776 were enunciated, years before, by the States of the Netherlands. The constitution of New York, acknowledged to be one of the best among those of the early States, was so by reason of being largely infused with the spirit, and moulded by the influence, of the Holland emigrants. In fact, wherever they got a foothold in this country, they proved themselves worthy of their liberty-loving and heroic ancestry of the Fatherland. They were loyal, tenacious of the right and true, conservative lovers of law and order, patrons of education, friends of public morals, of the rights of conscience, and of individual freedom.

The attachment of this people to religious ordinances, as embodied in their rigid standards, so grounded, as they believed, on the Divine Word, was deep and constant. Like that of the Puritan fathers, their faith had been tried in the furnace of persecution, and had come forth purified and strengthened. As well as the early settlers of New England, did they regard religion as the necessary foundation for a prosperous State. It held, accordingly, the first place in their institutions and economies, as it did in their personal convictions. Wherever they sought a home, the church was sure to accompany them; and around this ark of their safety gathered old and young, with reverent and affectionate interest in its welfare and preservation. For half a century after the settlement of Albany, the Dutch church was the only religious organization to be found there. The edifice reared for public worship, quaint and even grotesque in its architecture, as judged, at least, by the taste of to-day, was located at what is now the intersection of State street and Broadway, in the centre of both. It was planted here in order to guard against Indian attacks, liable to be made at any moment in that then frontier settlement. The building, in fact, was so constructed as to be a little fortress within itself, the worshippers going armed to be prepared for possible surprises, as so many New England congregations of that day were obliged to do.

This antique structure continued to serve the needs of the early settlement till 1714, when larger space became necessary for the growing numbers of the congregation. The old fabric was therefore replaced by a new one, the walls of which were built up around the venerated pile that had been endeared to the hearts of the people by so many joyous and saddening memories. The new structure, though larger than the other, and built of stone, was very like the old in style and arrangements; and while this was going on—the process of building the former around the one to be supplanted—the regular worship in the latter was only interrupted for two or three Sabbaths. When the work was done, the old walls and débris were removed, and the new church stood ready for its expectant worshippers. The latter house remained for nearly a century, being taken down in 1806, several years after the congregation had removed to their then new church in North Pearl street, in which public worship has ever since been held.

This society, which was coeval with the settlement of Albany, and which had grown with its growth, was the largest and strongest in the city in 1798, when Mr. Nott assumed the charge of the Presbyterian Church. It was then under the pastoral charge of the Rev. John Bassett, whose ministry there had begun in 1787. The Rev. John B. Johnson became his colleague in 1796, continuing in this relation till 1802. Mr. Bassett was the first settled English pastor of this church; his predecessors having all preached in the Holland tongue, down to the year 1782, when Rev. Mr. Westerlo, who, till that time had conducted service in the old vernacular, began to preach in English. The transition had taken place only about fifteen years before Mr. Nott's settlement in Albany. In the Lutheran Church, one of the four churches then in the city, and now more than a century old, services were still held in the German language till 1808, when, by a formal vote of the trustees, elders, and deacons, it also was made to give place to the English. The Episcopal, or English Church as it was most commonly called, whose first edifice, located in the centre of State street, right at the foot of the old fort, was erected in 1715, had gradually grown in numbers, and, at the time of Mr. Nott's settlement, had become a prominent and vigorous society. The Presbyterian Church, therefore, occupied a distinctive position, and one which seemed, in the very nature of things, to insure the success of an earnest and efficient pastor. The Episcopal, with its peculiar ecclesiastical order and polity, held its own track and field of operations aloof from those of its neighbors; while of the remaining three churches, that to which Mr. Nott ministered was the only one in Albany, that distinctly represented English Presbyterianism. From similarity, therefore, not precisely of order, but of doctrine and mode of worship, it was attractive to the children of the Puritans who came to find a home in Albany. Of these the number was now rapidly increasing. The nearness of Albany to New England, the prospects for pushing successful business enterprise, brightening with the growth of the city, gave volume and strength to the current of migration. The effect of this was to create a speedy demand for new church organizations. The Presbyterian naturally received a large part of these new comers. They were drawn to it by the affinities referred to, but especially were they attracted by the reputation of its eloquent young pastor. One of this class, who settled in Albany toward the close of Dr. Nott's ministry there, when his popularity was in full flower and his influence most commanding, has thus recorded his views and impressions.

"Of the clergy of those days, if I am wise I shall say but little. First, because I recollect but little, and, secondly, because with me the subject is not a debatable one. One's opinions, unless moulded early, are often formed by accident, or spring up as the result of circumstances. It has often occurred to me as not a little singular that my attention should have been turned to the unkindred subjects of politics and religion at about the same period of time. The noise and triumph of Jefferson's election to the presidency led me to look a little into the mysterious philosophy of party movements; and the preaching of Dr. Nott carried me, *nolens volens,* into the Presbyterian brick church of South Pearl street. Thus I acquired, at nearly the same time; a decided inclination to *church and state;* or, in other words, a marked taste for politics and preaching. No one, certainly, could have studied under abler masters; and for many of the opinions I entertain to this day, I hold those masters responsible. . . Nott, I should say, was neither a Calvinist nor a Lutheran. In other words, he was no bigoted sectarian; and in this respect he bore, and still bears I think, but little resemblance to many of his clerical brethren. In *mind,* as well as in *manner,* he stood alone. The narrow dogmas and common-place oratory of the church were beneath him. His ambition was to make men *wiser* and *better,* rather than to promote sectarian interests. . . . .

"But it is not my business to sermonize, nor am I disposed to criticise the sermons of others. All I mean to say is, that Dr. Nott was by far the most eloquent and effective preacher of the period to which I refer; that he drew together the largest congregation, made the deepest impression, and commanded the profoundest respect. His church was filled to overflowing. His appearance in the pulpit, his style of eloquence, his very look,

"'Drew audience and attention still as night,
Or summer's noontide air.'

"His elocution was admirable, and his manner altogether better, because more impressive, than that of any other preacher of the day; yet he could not, I think, have been over twenty-eight or thirty years of age when I first heard him, which was in 1803. Shortly afterwards I had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted with him, and soon found he possessed powers and qualities of which his congregation little dreamed. His talents were by no means confined to pulpit eloquence, nor even to the wider range of clerical duties. His information extended to almost every department of life ; and with the whole fabric of human society he was perfectly familiar. He understood the animal *man*, not only in the abstract but in all the detail of action, passion, and propensity. He was, moreover, a mechanist, a political economist, a philosopher, and—what is of more consequence, in *any walk of life*—a man of keen observation and sound sense."

This account appears in a volume entitled "Random Recollections of Albany from 1800 to 1808," its author being Mr. Gorham A. Worth, a gentleman who had rare facilities for becoming thoroughly acquainted with his subject, and was well qualified, in other respects, to treat fairly and justly the several topics embraced in his book, "A View of Albany as it was at the beginning of this century." His picture is not too highly colored. He speaks, not from hearsay, but from his own personal knowledge, and his record of the charm and force of Dr. Nott's preaching simply confirms the decided testimony borne by so many others. Deeply interested audiences continued to fill his church during all the period of his ministry ; a part of these being formed of strangers and of new residents, such as the writer of this sketch was at the time mentioned. These last were drawn to him, at first, by the fame of his gifts, and retained by the increasing interest which they found in his fervid and eloquent presentation of the truth. His popularity was due in part to his liberal and catholic spirit. He stood at the farthest extreme from the dwarfish intolerance which sees the only good within the narrow circle of one's own ecclesiastical pale. He not only professed respect and love for Christian people of other sects, but showed, by practically affiliating with them when opportunity offered, how true and cordial were his sentiments toward all who loved a common Lord. This gained him favor among other bodies of Christians, so that Baptists, who at this time had no house of worship of their own in Albany, attended on his ministry, and found it pleasant and profiting. Methodists came, for the same reason and with like result. The Dutch Church also, and the Episcopalian, contributed of their people to swell the numbers forming his Sunday congregations. The legislature, which had but a short time before removed its sessions to Albany as a permanent place of meeting, furnished its quota of attendants; a large number of the members, when the body was in session, being among Mr. Nott's regular hearers. Transient visitors, moreover, remaining for a Sabbath in the city, many of them persons of mark, were wont to find their way to the Presbyterian Church. Among these were Judge W. W. Van Ness, Gouverneur Morris, Alexander Hamilton, Chancellor Kent, Brockholst Livingston, R. Tillottson, and others, State officers and magistrates hardly less widely known. Between some of them and the preacher there was much of personal intercourse, ripening afterwards into the closest friendship. The sceptical opinions that sprang from the French Revolution are well known as having had, at this time, an extensive influence in our land, and especially as affecting what were regarded as the more cultivated minds. Men of this class—some of them men of eminence—resorted to Dr. Nott. There is evidence that, in some cases, his lucid reasonings, as well as his remarkable eloquence, were of special benefit in establishing minds which had been led to waver. A striking series of sermons, delivered about this time in the Presbyterian Church, and which were very effective in this way, have lately been published. These discourses, though originally designed for a popular audience, are none the less fitted, on that account, to reach and impress minds of the broadest range and culture. Both classes, while owning the force of his reasoning, could hardly have failed to be affected by that intense fervor of appeal which is a marked feature of these sermons, as it ever was of his whole pulpit style and utterance in the days of his prime.

CHAPTER V.

MINISTRY IN ALBANY, 1798-1804.

Condition of the church on his settlement—Difficulties and their removal—Mr. Nott as a healer of dissensions—Labor of memorizing sermons—Week-day work—Lectures—Pastoral visiting—Outside labors—Interest in education—Fourth of July sermon—Portrait of Washington—Sermon in behalf of Ladies' Aid Society—Extracts—Fruits of the Sermon.

WHEN Mr. Nott became pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Albany, its affairs were not in the most settled condition. Its last pastor had given occasion to sundry charges against the correctness of his ministerial deportment. The truth of these it was found necessary to investigate; the process being at once tedious and painful. As usually happens in similar cases, parties were formed, much feeling was exhibited, and the difficulty had grown to such proportions as seriously to threaten the disruption of the church. The removal of the former incumbent from the pastorate did not restore peace to the society. The embers of the old disturbance continued to smoulder, ready at any moment to break out and rage afresh. As a consequence of this the church had remained vacant for three years. It had received only occasional ministrations. Among these, the labors of President Smith had proved not only acceptable, but efficient in composing the discordant elements which had foreboded so much evil. The people were at length ripe for the settlement of a pastor, and anxious to have a suitable one called. It was fortunate for them that their regards were fixed on Mr. Nott, and that he was induced to accept their invitation to settle amongst them as their minister. He was rarely skilled in the delicate and difficult work of healing discords among brethren, and bringing those who had been alienated from each other to walk together in unity. This was a work he was often called to perform during his long life—a labor of love ever undertaken cheerfully on his part, and rarely without success.

The situation now was one that tasked all his resources and his skill. He showed himself equal to the emergency. While he had the popular heart with him from the first, there were some in the congregation who, in consequence of the former dissensions, did not unite heartily in his call and settlement, or gave them, at most, a languid and hesitating assent.

This opposition, however, was short-lived. His familiar intercourse with the people of his charge—by means of which he was enabled to bring into play his extraordinary powers of persuasion, his kindliness, his genial temper, his sympathetic interest in the welfare of individuals—soon won their confidence, and even brought most of those who had been dissatisfied, to become his firmest supporters and most hearty friends. The effect was soon visible. Harmony was restored. The church became one in its esteem and love for its pastor, and in its readiness to coöperate with him in whatever plans he might propose. This grave obstruction removed, he entered upon his work with all the earnestness, ardor, and discrimination which were sure to mark him when a high purpose demanded the exercise of his best energies.

The labor required by his preparation for the pulpit was found at first a very severe one. His audiences were more critical than those he had hitherto addressed. His two years pastorate in a plain, country parish had furnished him with but few written sermons, and these were not quite such as the circumstances of his new field demanded. He had never practised reading manuscript discourses in the pulpit, regarding it as a restraint upon the preacher's freedom and effectiveness. His new position furnished an additional reason against such an unrhetorical method, though it demanded of him more labor and study, in the intellectual preparation of his sermons. An important element in his church was the Scotch, whose hostility to manuscript preaching was inveterate. He therefore wrote out his two sermons for the Sabbath, with the utmost care, and committed them to memory, a practice from which he never afterwards deviated. The strength of his memory has already been noticed, as well as the achievements of which it was capable. The early training in this respect now bore its fruits. So true was his memory to the trust he was wont to repose in it, that there was no sign of constraint in his utterance, or of effort to recall a word, or of misgiving as to what he was about to put forth; but his speech flowed easily and naturally, as if quite unpremeditated. He had the art to make what was really an elaborate artistic work seem like nature herself, and this formed one of the charms of his incisive and captivating eloquence.

In addition to his Sabbath-day labors, which included not unfrequently a third service, either in his own church, or in aid of some neighboring pastor, he held religious meetings on two evenings of each week. The youth of the congregation, moreover, received his special care, and stated catechetical instruction, with careful study of the Scriptures, formed a prominent feature of his ministerial round of duty. The families of his congregation were faithfully visited. At least once a year he made it a point to see every family beside its own hearth-stone, with the special object of conversing personally with its several members, and urging upon them the duty and practice of personal religion. At other times, he would drop in upon the family circles composing his large charge, mingling pleasantly with them in social conversation, though rarely letting an opportunity pass without seeking to impress upon them that deeper spiritual truth which underlies all social obligations. His thorough acquaintance with his people, reaching to the individuals of each family and to the experiences which bring gladness or grief to various homes, strengthened mightily his hold upon the hearts of his flock and thereby deepened the influence of his pulpit ministrations.

Besides these regular labors, there were others of a miscellaneous sort, which his position as pastor of a church specially prominent in the region, and his character as a preacher widely known, were constantly imposing upon him. Parents from a distance invoked his Christian care and counsel on behalf of sons living in Albany. Those having sons to educate consulted him by letter as to the best schools, and the best methods of reading and instruction. Home missionaries, in search of a proper field, came to his door to seek direction, and, not unfrequently, those already located, and in straits for supplies, placed their needs and wishes before him, urgently seeking advice or more substantial relief. Religious books, pamphlets, and other publications, whose circulation among the churches was desired, were sent to him with requests for his recommendation, and for his personal efforts to bring them before the Christian public. The calls upon him for special preaching services were numerous; some of them withdrawing him to long distances from home, and making large demands upon his time. In addition to all this, his interest in education, and his well-known experience as an educator, subjected him to many appeals for aid in originating and carrying out plans for the endowment of schools, academies, and other seminaries of learning. He had become a trustee of Union College, then in its infancy, and the intelligent interest which he took in its welfare caused many of its burdens, and a large part of the correspondence which grew out of its nascent condition, to devolve upon his hands. Though the pressure of these manifold cares was severely felt at times, it was never disheartening. He stood ready to do what he could in the advancement of every worthy cause. Nor was any proper application to him for aid, whether coming from individuals or societies, whether referring to a public service or more private ministry of kindness, ever dismissed or evaded, on the ground of too great pressure of present and imperative duties.

The occasional discourses delivered by him during his residence in Albany were numerous, and some of them striking. The occurrence of any event of special interest, whether national or local, was sure to be made the subject of a discourse before his people. One of this kind was given in his church on the 4th of July, 1801, being the twenty-fifth anniversary of our National Independence. The subject is the providence of God toward our American Israel. This is illustrated by a striking parallel between the Jews and the American people. On the one side of the picture there is shown to us the chosen nation of old, with its deliverance from Egyptian bondage, its skilful guidance by Moses under the divine direction, and its entrance, at last, into the favored land which was to be their prosperous home. The counterpart to this is our own long struggle for independence, with its sufferings and toils, its reverses, its despondencies, crowned at last by the secure attainment of a national heritage far wider in extent and more prosperous in national resources than that which fell to the emancipated of the earlier time.

It was regarded in its day as a most eloquent effort, and produced a powerful effect, drawing forth as it did the praises of men like Clinton, Kent, and Hamilton. We cannot now so well judge of it. To do so we must carry ourselves back to the time when these events were still vivid, and the memory of Washington, who is so glowingly eulogized, still carried with it its fresh fragrance and unfading bloom. It was only a few years after his departure, so noted for its calm Christian resignation and more than Roman dignity. The leading men of the Revolutionary period were still living. It is the peculiar mark of a true heroic period that near contemporaneity, instead of diminishing, augments the glory of its actors. They have impressed themselves upon the heart of the times, and the eulogy called out carries with it the unmistakable evidence of truthfulness and feeling. It gives, indeed, the outward tone and style to similar efforts in after times, but the lack of that glowing interest too often imparts to them the appearance of hollowness and timidity. We do great wrong to orations like those of Dr. Nott and Fisher Ames, or of others to be found in our old school-books, when we compare them with more modern productions, whose imitations of their language without their heartiness, and of their rhetorical figures without the emotion that inspired them, we justly condemn as false or sophomorical. It is the lees only that are left; the old wine, with its hearty flavor, is gone. Hence it has become the fashion to sneer at Fourth of July orations. At that time they were vivid remembrances of most stirring events. As the fruits of such a heroic period, they have a classical interest, reminding the scholar of the orations of Pericles, so caricatured in their imitations by the timid and artificial rhetoricians of a later age. The audiences, too, were very different. Instead of bored listeners, having little interest in recitals that have become vapid by repetition, or enduring them only in compliance with a custom deemed patriotic, the men who heard Dr. Nott's Fourth of July oration in 1803 had seen Washington; many of them had fought under his command; all of them had fresh in mind the memorable scenes and events of which the orator's then fresh and glowing figures seemed but the natural description, excluding from the mind every thought of mere oratorical invention.

At this period of his life, Dr. Nott was, moreover, especially distinguished for his charity sermons. In aid of charitable associations—now numerous, but then beginning to spring up every where in our land—his services were in great request. Aside from labors of this kind in Albany and its vicinity, he was not unfrequently called to the city of New York, as the orator most in demand whenever means were wanted for the establishment of hospitals, orphan asylums, refuges for the insane, or other similar efforts of beneficence. Instead of giving in full any of the discourses on these occasions, or long extracts from them which would now possess but little interest in themselves, it may be better to state, as their most important and fully conceded merit, that they were universally noted for their great success. To use Judge Campbell's language, "No man ever showed greater power and skill in loosening the purse-strings and drawing the money out of people's pockets." On such occasions he is described as almost irresistible. There are old men living yet who love to dilate on his remarkable eloquence in painting the deformities of grudging avarice, as set in contrast with the miseries and the appealing claims of the poor. It must surely have been eloquence of the purest and loftiest stamp that achieved such success; and no mere descriptive eulogy of his biographer can equal, now, the bare statement of the fact. To secure a charity sermon from Dr. Nott in his prime, was equivalent to the certainty of an overflowing contribution.

One short specimen only will be given, although some who well remember Dr. Nott's efforts in this department may think that the author might have made a better selection. Some parts of it are simple, even to homeliness, in their details. The reader who coldly receives it from the bare printed page can hardly fail to see that it must have been effective in itself, from its directness and touching simplicity of recital. To form an idea, however, of its true power, there must be borne in mind how much it must have been enhanced by the elocutionary pathos peculiar to the speaker, and which such occasions ever called out in a most remarkable degree. It is from a sermon delivered before the Albany Ladies' Association for the Relief of the Poor. It was a most inclement season; the funds of the benevolent ladies were nearly exhausted; the sufferings of the destitute were very great; the reality was enough, if effectively and truly stated ; a feeling heart supplied the place of rhetorical artifice, and the orator thus proceeds to plead for the clients whom, he says, Christ has given him. It is a mere fragment, and it is that which gives it its appearance of unpremeditated abruptness.

> " Their means are comparatively small, their influence necessarily most circumscribed. And can any man in his senses suppose that a family, when the parent, or parents, are sick, and thus cut off from all opportunity of securing their own wants, and having no other resource, can possibly subsist upon the scanty pittance usually allowed to the poor? My God!* It would not even buy fuel to warm, or a candle to light, the wretched dwelling where they suffer, and where, without your charity they must die! How do they submit to this? Do you ask how? It is not submission, I answer; it is not resignation, but dire necessity. They have no true social intercourse. They converse with sorrow, with sighs and with tears, or they moan in silence. They suffer from hunger, from nakedness, from cold. Under these complicated miseries, sickness invades them. By sickness their miseries are increased, and, after lingering a few days, they die. This is the end, unless perchance some charitable neighbor pities and interposes. You refer me to the legal provision for the poor. Legal provision! Notwithstanding the pittance of aid that comes from this source I have seen families that were ready to perish. I have seen tender females—not the wretched outcasts from society whose vices shut our eyes to their wretchedness—but women, gentle, loving, virtuous, of good repute, reduced to the very extremity of want. I have seen the mother of a destitute family, struggling beyond her strength to procure food for her children, I have seen her, when overcome by these struggles, lying forsaken, friendless, emaciated—a bed of straw the only place of repose for her exhausted frame. Yes, I have seen her lying there expiring, without a hand to minister to her last wants, or even close her dying eyes."

After this picture, so simply yet so touchingly drawn, he uses it as a ground of direct personal appeal to those whom God had blessed with all the comforts that affluence supplies.

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* Such exclamations may startle some classes of readers ; but they are common in Dr. Nott's discourses. They remind us of the style of the eloquent French preachers. But Dr. Nott certainly never imitated, as it is doubtful whether he had ever studied or even read them. His style of oratory at least was all his own.

"And can you whose hearts overflow with sympathy for the members of your own circle and your own households—you who have shown such kindness to the one who now addresses you—can you be insensible to the wants, and sighs, and sorrows, of those on whose behalf he pleads? I feel a strong confidence that you will contribute cheerfully, liberally, for their relief. Think not that such offerings will favor idleness or lead to beggary. We ask not alms for profuse or general distribution. We solicit only a little of that abundance which God has given you. As compared with your wealth, indeed, how small the request; or as contrasted with your enjoyments, how moderate the relief! For what do I stand here begging before you? It is to procure a staff for the old man, a bit of bread for the widow, a nurse to tend the infant, a kind assistant to close the eyes of the forsaken and dying mother. These are the purposes for which we solicit your charity, and to which we pledge ourselves it shall be sacredly supplied. I retract what I have said. You need no such personal pledge; for it is the partners of your bosoms who are to administer the offering.

. . . .

"Some of you may say, perhaps: The wants of the poor are numerous and perpetual. Be it so. And is not this a reason why your charity should be liberal and perpetual also? Because there are many poor, will you leave them to suffer and die? Because their wants are numerous, do you resolve to bestow little? Is this the language, this the feeling, of the household of faith? Are such thoughts the promptings of hearts softened by grace and full of the hope of immortality? Ah! my brethren, complain not of the number of the poor. Be not turned away from them because of the magnitude of their wants. Know ye not who it was that said, "The poor have ye always with you"? Jesus! Master! I thank Thee for this hope, that in the persons of the poor I may testify my love for Thee. Yes, it is He who has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

It was no mere rhetorical or sentimental effusion, no labored effort, drawing the mind away from the pitiful reality of the suffering poor to a false feeling of admiration for the speaker's oratorical power or oratorical dexterity; it was no heartless dissertation on pauperism in its relations to political economy but a true *charity sermon,* coming from the heart of the preacher, and going directly to the hearts of his audience.

The effect of this particular sermon was extraordinary, and the collection taken at its close—though it might occasion no surprise in this day—was the largest charity collection ever made before in an Albany church, proving by this sensible token how deeply the people were moved, and what a hold the speaker's appeal had taken upon their Christian judgments, as well as upon their hearts. The address was printed at the request, and for the benefit of the Ladies' Association, and from its sale there was received in addition, more than one thousand dollars to be donated to the noble charity in whose behalf it had been preached.

CHAPTER VI.

MINISTRY IN ALBANY, 1798-1804.—CONTINUED.

Labors in behalf of Education—A Trustee of Union College—Albany Academy—Suggestions and plans set forth in a review—Social customs of Albany—Funeral Feasts—Dinner Parties—Mr. Nott's influence against both—Letter to his brother—New Year's Gifts—Cask of wine—Increase of salary—Changes in social usages and sentiments effected by the Temperance Reform.

THE arduous work of the pastorate in Albany would have justified the incumbent in declining other tasks, however appropriate they might have seemed to his higher office. The danger of overworking should always enter into a prudent man's calculations. Dr. Nott was preëminently a prudent man, and the above maxim he never failed to impress upon faithful students, or any others who might need the warning. In his own case, however, there were two traits of character which modified the rule, if they did not render him altogether unmindful of it. One was his strong sense of duty, accompanied by a lively perception of its various calls; the other was an intense love of action, a keen desire to "do whatever his hand found to do," whether in the way of public or private influence. There was in him no mere *vis inertiæ.* He was not contented even with the static equilibrium of rest, or the maintaining of a regulated balance of his powers in any single work, however useful or exalted. At this time the pastoral office gave him that chief work, and most faithfully did he answer every claim it made upon him. The cause of education, however, had ever a high place in his regard, and even then, his zeal in behalf of it was intense and unswerving. Such was his yearning to be engaged in the work of lifting minds out of ignorance, and training them for practical usefulness, that, without waiting to be appealed to for aid, he often took the initiative, devising plans for a higher and more liberal education, and submitting them to those whose enlightened support he wished to secure. His character in this respect soon came to be appreciated, and he was invested with trusts that showed the confidence early reposed in his judgment and ability. Shortly after his settlement in Albany, and when only twenty-seven years of age, he was elected a trustee of Union College. He soon became a leading member of the board, and during the continuance of his Albany ministry, his efforts in behalf of the infant institution were a chief means of starting it in that career of honor and prosperity which was so signally to mark it under his own presidency.

At this period very little attention had been given to education in Albany. The schools of the city were of the most ordinary kind, and very absurd methods of instruction were in vogue. The importance of a better system, and of a higher order of education, had begun to occupy the minds of some of the leading citizens. No academy had yet been established, though several plans had been suggested for some such higher institution. On the 18th of March, 1804, a meeting of citizens was held for the attainment of this aim. A committee, consisting of the Lieutenant-Governor of the State, then residing in Albany, the Mayor of the city, Chancellor Lansing, Rev. Eliphalet Nott, Rev. John De Witt, Messrs. Henry and Beers, was appointed to consider, and report upon the subject.* At a meeting on the following May, their plan was submitted and approved. It proposed to fuse the city schools, and to organize the academy on the basis of such consolidation. No immediate results, however, grew out of the project; the enterprise being suffered to slumber for a season, and not being effiiently prosecuted before 1813. In this year, the Albany Academy was duly incorporated, and preparations were at once begun for completing this important and long-delayed work. The present academy building was commenced in 1815, and finished in 1817, at an expense of $100,000. Among the plans for making such an institution a power for good in the city, and in the community, was one which Dr. Nott devised during the incipient stages referred to, and whilst the idea was yet in its embryo state. It is presented as a reverie of one deeply concerned in the question of education, and in a pleasant, almost a playful vein, sets forth what was really for that time—and for our time, too, it may be said—an ingenious, far-sighted, and comprehensive system of academical or higher school instruction. It is an interesting paper, and we therefore present it, though belonging to a date so much earlier, and, as is commonly thought, so much less advanced than our own.

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* "Munsell's Annals,"

"PLAN OF AN ACADEMY. E. NOTT.

"ALBANY, March, 1803.

"The alarm of an intruder breaking into my house called me from my pillow this morning somewhat earlier than usual. By this means I am furnished with a leisure hour; that hour I devote to an object in which we both feel an interest—I mean an Academy.

"I would by no means presume to dictate a plan for the institution now in contemplation. But if you will allow me—like Newton when planning a divinity hall—to indulge a sort of reverie, and imagine myself a person of some consequence in Utopia, where I could have the modelling of every thing to my own mind, let this imagination be a plan for an Academy. In this way I shall offer you my thoughts with great freedom—and should any of these Utopian regulations be applicable to your design, you will be welcome to use them.

"Having premised these things, I would now inform you that I propose to have my academy embrace a complete system of education, and furnish to pupils the means of pursuing a regular course of study, from the first rudiments of English reading to the last finish of classical culture.

"The better to accomplish these objects, I propose to have it divided into at least four different departments:

"One of elocution, including whatever relates to accurate spelling, correct reading, and graceful and proper delivery; one of penmanship, including—besides instruction in the modes of forming and joining letters as a study distinct from the practical art—bookkeeping, letter writing, mapping, and stenography; one of mathematics, philosophy, astronomy; and *one* for the learned languages.

"In order to carry this plan into effect. I must have a building or buildings, containing at least four separate rooms for constant use, and a hall for examinations, exhibitions, and other occasional exercises. This building I would fix in some central part of the city. Besides this, I would erect in the different wards smaller houses where little children might be taught the alphabet, and to spell, and, in this way, be prepared to join some class in the department of elocution. By such an expedient, I expect to save at least six months to the pupil, which time, on the present plan of education, is lost in correcting, after he enters the academy, the bad habits he has already contracted in common schools—a thing which must be done, unless they are left to become confirmed and ineradicable.

"By this time you will perceive that my Utopian institution is to differ materially, in its structure, from others of the same name, the most of which either make no provision for the lower branches, or blend them and the higher together; thus rendering what is called an academy a kind of scientific Babel.

"That the last of these methods is bad, I think must be obvious to every candid observer. Where reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin, Greek, etc., etc., are all pursued in the same room, the attention of both the master and his pupils must be divided among a variety of objects, and consequently be fixed on none. No regular system can be adopted; for such a medley of pursuit is incompatible with system. Would not a man be ridiculed who should propose to teach music, engraving, fencing, dancing, horsemanship, and algebra, all at the same time, and in the same place? Would it not be especially absurd to take this method with children, whose minds are volatile, and whose attention, in spite of every precaution, will be too much diverted.

"Ridiculous as this would be, it certainly would not be more so than our present plans of instruction. In all our schools, parts of education are blended together; than which nothing could be more incongruous. Hence it is, that though our children are kept at school during most of their early years, there are so few who can either spell accurately, write legibly, read intelligently, or speak tolerably.

"These aspects, but too obvious to every observer, are not owing to want of time, or to want of genius, but to the incompetency of teachers, and to a radical defect in our manner of teaching.

"If, however, that plan of an academy is bad which blends together the different branches of education, one that wholly neglects the lower branches is still worse. So long as the management of common schools is left to chance or caprice, it must be expected that they will be badly regulated. Masters will often be called to teach children, who themselves are ignorant of the first rudiments of reading as an art. The pupil falls into an erroneous manner, which, without correction, will increase and strengthen with his years. Bad examples only are exhibited before him. He copies the errors and defects of his master; mistakes blemishes for beauties; becomes an adept in the particular cant or tone of the school to which he belongs—thus forming the worst of habits, which are communicated from class to class, and handed down from one generation of boys to another.

"And when I ask, are these errors to be corrected? When he enters the grammar school? He is received there, not to learn to read, but to construe and parse Greek and Latin. His master is satisfied ordinarily if, in these respects, he is able to perform his task—and thus the unfortunate learner is permitted to pass on from the academy to college with all the defects of a vitiated elocution.

"But were it otherwise, were it made a part of the Latin master's duty to teach boys to read, still would it not be easier to prevent errors than to correct them? No one, who knows the obstinacy of habit, can be at a loss to answer this question.

"If children are ever to be taught to read well, this must be done at first. Is it wise to send them to school for three or four years to acquire habits which it will require as many more afterwards to correct? Especially is it wise thus to employ the golden years of childhood, when the pliant organs are easily formed to the pronunciation of any sound, and when, as yet, neither prejudice nor evil habit has taken root? These defects in the common methods of primary education, as well as others which may be mentioned, have induced me, in the plan of my Utopian academy, to embrace the lower, as well as the higher branches of learning, and to provide for having all branches tanght separately.

"By these means I expect to correct existing errors, to remedy existing defects, and to control, in future, the whole manner of teaching in this city. I am the more inclined to aim at this, because I suppose Utopia to be, like Albany, peopled with emigrants from various nations, among whom there is the Dutch dialect, the Irish dialect, the Scotch dialect, along with our peculiar Yankee dialect. In this Utopian Babel there are, moreover, to be reckoned, the African servants, who speak a kind of mongrel English, which they communicate to the children. All these give rise to errors which, without great care, can never be wholly corrected.

"I am aware that to carry the above plan into execution, considerable funds will be necessary; but as I can command these much easier in Utopia than in Albany, I shall, notwithstanding, adopt it, and, when laying the foundation for the chief school of a wealthy and growing city, endeavor to make it so broad that a suitable superstructure may be raised upon it.

"Should I succeed in my proposed plan, two advantages not yet mentioned will result from it. The expense of education will be diminished; and the poor will be furnished at their doors with the means of attaining it.

"But I have wandered in my reverie farther, perhaps, than you will have either time or inclination to follow me, and shall therefore only add that,

"I am, etc.,

"E. NOTT.

"J. V. HENRY.

"B. ALLEN."

The system unfolded in the foregoing scheme betrays little indeed of the Utopian dreamer. While showing how strong a hold the educational problem had taken of his mind, and how familiar he had become with some of its main features, its suggestions are at once bold in conception and capable of most practical application. Had the people of Albany responded to the liberal views of Mr. Nott, and not only adopted his plan, but promptly acted on his suggestions, the city would have enjoyed the advantages of a first-class academy nearly a score of years before such school was actually established. As it was, the Albany Academy, when grown to be a reality, and conducted with acknowledged skill and efficiency, had nothing to exhibit, either in its plan or management, at all in advance of the sagacious ideas which the reverie so vividly suggests.

During this period the social customs of the people of Albany, like the people themselves, were in some respects peculiar, and must have appeared grotesque to one who had been reared in a Puritan atmosphere. Among these was a custom which prevailed at funerals of returning in solemn procession to the house from which the deceased had been borne to burial, and there finding a luxurious feast spread for the common entertainment. It was strictly a Dutch custom, had been of long standing, and its practice had extended to other families than those of purely Holland lineage. The more prominent the deceased, or the family from which the burial took place, the ampler was the provision made for the refreshment of those who had just looked sorrowingly upon his grave. Tables were loaded on these occasions with appetizing viands and tempting drinks, to which tobacco and pipes formed the necessary complement. The elongated visage, and subdued, serious accents which the presence of the tomb rendered appropriate, speedily vanished before the magic of this good cheer. Ordinary topics were discussed, and gayety took the place of gloom. So attractive became this afterpiece, that the company often held together far into the night, and even through the night; the house of mourning being thus completely changed into one of feasting. Against this custom the new pastor resolutely set his face. He felt how incongruous and unbecoming were these festivals held over the dead, and how pernicious an influence they must exert, not only upon those who took part in them, but upon the community. In laboring to effect a change, his success was complete, not only with his own people, who were less wedded to the observance than the descendants of the first settlers, but with those of other communions. The custom has been long since abolished, and is now regarded by the present generation as among those strangely cherished practices of a past day, the chief wonder concerning which is that they should ever have gained a foot-hold in a Christian community.

Another custom which found little favor with Mr. Nott, was the giving of select dinner parties, provided on a very liberal scale, by persons forming the *élite* of Albany society. The clergyman, of course, was a favored guest, and the occasion was one which tended to promote a degree of social unreserve, not to say festive exhilaration, which he judged unfavorable to the maintenance of a proper ministerial dignity. No man was certainly less of a precisian. No man could enter with more genial freedom into sprightly conversation. There was nothing of the morose ascetic, either in his temper, visage, speech, or deportment. He understood perfectly the power of an attractive social religion. At the same time he appreciated what was due to his own character and profession as a minister of the Gospel, and how essential to his usefulness was the maintenance of personal dignity. He would not therefore place himself in positions that might compromise them, while he saw with quick and unerring perspicacity the line which it would be unsafe for him to overstep. Looking with distrust upon this free dining out, as putting him at a disadvantage by compliances he might find it painful to resist, he shaped his course in conformity with his firm convictions.

In a letter to his brother Samuel, he gives a playful description of the Albany mode of observing the New Year. It unfolds, also, the growing regard in which he was held by his people, and presents a somewhat singular exhibition of it as given by the young men of his parish.

"ALBANY, January 3, 1803.

"DEAR BROTHER: Through distinguishing goodness we and ours have survived the last year and entered on a new one. Passing one of these landmarks by which we ascertain our progress through this vale of tears, we look around us to see who of our company is missing, we remember our absent friends, and send them our affectionate salutations and wish them the enjoyment of the best of blessings.

"There is a mixture of agreeable and disagreeable in the manner of spending New Year's day in this place. The morning is ushered in by the firing of guns, the beating of drums, the sound of musical instruments, etc. This confused noise, mingled with songs and exclamations of parties strolling the streets, wakes our children between three and four o'clock, who begin their inquisitive babblings, and mingle their infantile mirth with the bawlings which assail our ears from out of doors. This scene of confusion is continued till sunrise, so that after three o'clock all sleep for the night has vanished.

"After this, a group of boys collect on your stoop, vociferating 'Happy New Year,' for which they expect cookies in return. These cookies are of a peculiar kind, made on purpose for distribution, and stamped with emblematical figures. Against these visitors, who come to load you with their good wishes, you are compelled to keep your doors shut to secure you not only from their loquacious impertinence, but from their pilfering also; for this is a season of liberty and equality in which the rights of property by certain individuals are forgotten.

"Next follow the newsboys, with their annual address, for which they expect an annual gratuity. You have hardly discharged this demand, when a beggarly set, who have neither character nor manners to recommend them, crawling forth from old stables and cellar kitchens, accompanied by blacks, bond and free, drunk and sober, begin to call on you to receive whatever your charity or impatience is pleased to bestow.

"By this time the Dutch Church bell rings, which brings together a large audience, collected from all the congregations in town, to which Dominie Bassett preaches an affectionate sermon of at least an hour long, concluding with a personal address, and a benediction upon all the different orders in society, whether absent or present, from the President of the Union down to the consistory of the Dutch Church. When sermon is ended, a procession is formed of the church corporation and principal citizens, who, together with the different ministers, the officers of State and the city corporation, proceed to the Governor's to give him the compliments of the season, and refresh themselves with a glass of punch and a slice of ham. From the Governor's the company proceed to the Mayor's where the same ceremony is observed, and the same civilities are exchanged.

"After this, the clergymen call on their particular friends, reciprocate benedictions, drink wine, and receive cookies. Having done this, they return home, when the principal members of their respective congregations call on them to congratulate them on the return of a New Year.

"The remainder of the day is spent in visiting the sick, in social visits, in sending portions to the poor, and presents to the clergy. And here I quit the general subject, that I may give you some account of my own matters. Besides smaller presents, I received New Year's week gratuities to the amount of three hundred and eighty dollars—two hundred and fifty of this, in cash, from gentlemen representing the congregation, and one hundred and thirty, in wine, from the young men, intended as their New Year's gift. In addition to the above, my congregation, at a meeting held the Thursday before New Year's day, voted to raise my salary from four to five hundred pounds per year, and their trustees have since sent me their bond for the payment of it. Such an act of liberality was unsolicited and unexpected on my part, nor had I heard that it was in contemplation till after a vote had passed the board of trustees to that effect. This addition to my salary—a circumstance agreeable in itself—has been rendered still more so by the manner in which it has been accomplished, especially in view of the fact, that the congregation were united in sentiment with respect to the measure, and that it met with no opposition.

"With respect to the state of religion in my congregation, and in the city, I have nothing important to communicate. Our people, however, attend church with remarkable punctuality, and we have had more seriousness than usual among our youth. Some have been added to the church, some are now seeking after God, as is also the case with some heads of families. Our praying societies have for some time been crowded, and we have hoped that God was about to pour his Spirit out among us. As yet, alas! our hopes have not been realized. May God grant the prayer of his people in due time. We are anxious to hear from you, and hope that you enjoy the Divine presence and blessing. I need not tell you that I have written this in great haste.

"Your affectionate brother,

"E. NOTT."

Apart from the interest belonging to this pleasant account of the mode then in vogue of greeting the opening of a new year, the letter refers to one or two things deserving of notice. The salary of a popular city minister of that day, the pastor of a large and strong congregation, was four hundred pounds, or one thousand dollars. This sum was raised to twelve hundred and fifty dollars, after Mr. Nott had served the church five years with eminent acceptance and success; the pastor viewing such free action on the part of his people as a mark of extraordinary liberality. What was thus paid, therefore, would seem to have been regarded as an exceptionally large salary, which the fame of the preacher and the flourishing condition of the church made it fitting to offer. The scale of ministerial compensation, as in values generally, has greatly changed within half a century, as might be expected, but the contrast between the salaries paid then and now to a preacher having the gift of attracting crowds, is very curious and striking.

Another noticeable thing is the New Year's gift of a cask of wine, presented by the young men of the society as a token of their respect and admiring appreciation. It was accepted, too, quite as a thing of course, and referred to commendingly, as if being in itself the most proper offering in the world. It was so considered, beyond a doubt, both by recipient and givers, and the fact marks the wonderful revulsion in public sentiment in regard to the drinking usages of society which sixty years have brought to pass. We have only to conceive of a clergyman's receiving now, from the young men of his church, or from any source, a cask of wine as an avowed testimonial of regard, to be made sensible of the thoroughness and totality of this revulsion. Mr. Nott became afterward among the most pronounced and uncompromising temperance men of the nation, advocating total abstinence both by voice and pen, with signal eloquence and power. He began the work among the earliest reformers in the State, and ended it only when his energies were exhausted by years, but not before he had witnessed that signal triumph of its principles which banished, in large measure, the wine cup from the social board. An offering like that which he had once received from his young friends without surprise, and counted harmless, would have been looked upon by him with wonder, in the light of the advanced ideas of a later day. Such a gift, to use the energetic language of South, he would have afterward regarded as the "first-born of impossibilities."

The above accounts have been given mainly in Dr. Nott's own words. It should be added, however, that not only at that time, but during his whole after life, he was accustomed to decline attendance upon dinner parties, where the clergyman is so strongly tempted to display himself as, for the time being, a liberal man of the world, and, in avoidance of the charge of sanctimoniousness, to go, sometimes, to an excess of frivolity. No minister of the Gospel was ever more free from a formal and uncongenial puritanism, and yet no one more strictly heeded the grave advice of Paul (Eph. v. 4), to avoid what he so significantly calls, "story-telling, foolish jesting," "things unbecoming," public talks in which sense, as well as dignity, are buried beneath the reporter's interjections of "laughter" and "loud applause." All these things were as foreign to his Christian temperament as to his Christian principle, to say nothing of what he regarded as due to the sacred office, with its superhuman sanction. He was very firm, always in declining invitations to such scenes, and his consistency is shown in advice to that effect, as appearing in letters to theological students in whose spiritual welfare, and ministerial success, he felt deeply interested.

CHAPTER VII.

MINISTRY IN ALBANY, 1798-1804.—CONTINUED.

His domestic life—Failing health of Mrs. Nott—Her death—Her character as portrayed by her husband—Changes wrought by this loss in his family relations—Mrs. Tillottson's kindness in his affliction—Letters—Thinks of relinquishing his pastoral charge—Death of Alexander Hamilton—Mr. Nott's sermon on this event—Extracts—Portrait of Hamilton—Effect of this sermon—Success of his ministry in Albany—His favor with Christians of all denominations.

WHILE Mr. Nott was performing his arduous duties with energy and success, and growing in higher favor with his church and the community, his domestic life was passing tranquilly along, though not wholly free from solicitude. Mrs. Nott's health had gradually improved from the time she went to Ballston from Cherry Valley, so that, on coming to Albany, there seemed a fair prospect of its being quite restored. A house had been taken in Hudson street, but the location proving unfavorable to health, it was left, after a few months, for one in North Pearl street, where Mr. Nott continued to reside till her death. In the spring of 1799 Mrs. Nott visited her parents in Plainfield, remaining there several months, until the birth of their only daughter on the 30th of September following. Two other children besides were added to the family, one of whom, John, was born in Albany, December 14, 1801, the other, Benjamin, November 20, 1803. The health of Mrs. Nott had never become robust after her long and severe illness in 1797, though she did not shrink from meeting the increasing cares and burdens which her family imposed. Her spirit seemed to rise with the growing demands made upon her for corresponding exertion. After the birth of her last child, however, her prostrated energies seemed incapable of rallying. For a few months she continued to struggle with disease, till, as a last resort, on March 9, 1804, she was taken to Ballston, whose waters had before proved of so much benefit. No remedy could save or aid her. Two days after her arrival she expired. To a large circle of friends her death was a sore bereavement. The blow to the husband was of the severest kind. The light of his dwelling was quenched, and the joy of his heart suddenly snatched away. His home had become a desolation ; he could not continue to dwell in it, beneath the shadow of his ever-present loss. Its greatness will appear from the following picture of Mrs. Nott's character and virtues, which no one who knew her in that day could pronounce exaggerated or too highly colored. It is her husband's own sketch.

"Mrs. Nott was rather small of stature, her complexion was fair, her countenance expressive, and enlivened by an eye uncommonly brilliant, penetrating, and significant.

"Her genius was sprightly, her mind enriched by reading, and her taste refined by a happy education. In her conversation she was unassuming, in her manners artless and unaffected.

"In youth she was vivacious, and possessed a talent for satire, but a talent completely concealed beneath the veil of discretion in maturer years.

"She was open-hearted ; seldom disguising either her feelings or her sentiments ; but, on the contrary, discovered both with a candor which, though it sometimes made enemies, always endeared her to her friends.

"Her domestic virtues were exemplary. Industry and economy were conspicuous in the care of a rising family, which for years previous to her death had been committed by her confiding partner almost exclusively to herself. Filial respect marked her conduct to her parents, fraternal affection to her brothers and sisters, and conjugal love and maternal tenderness, happily blended in her character, were displayed in a life devoted to the interests of her husband and her offspring.

"As a neighbor, she was peaceable and obliging, as a friend, candid, sincere, and affectionate beyond measure. Her heart knew no guile, and her bosom, hallowed sanctuary! preserved inviolate its sacred trusts.

"As a sufferer under long and repeated sicknesses, her firmness, fortitude, and patience have seldom been equalled. She submitted to the Divine rod with patient resignation. Under its chastening stroke she was never once heard to utter a murmuring word. As a member of the church and as a Christian, her conduct was such as becometh godliness, and her life adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour.

"For more than a year before her death, her friends had observed that she became less social and more contemplative. This probably resulted from a prevailing persuasion that she was to die in early life; an opinion founded in the obvious impairments which her constitution had already suffered. At a very early period after the commencement of her last illness, she forewarned her friends of her approaching dissolution. Hopeful symptoms, however, beguiled almost every one but herself. Among the most hopeful of these, was the wonted cheerfulness that accompanied her to the end. Notwithstanding this, she almost daily declared to those around her that she should die, often caused the third part of the 39th Psalm, as paraphrased by Watts, to be read in her hearing, and often solicited her partner to mingle his prayers with hers before the throne of mercy, that she might be resigned and prepared for what she was fully persuaded would be the event. While thus imperceptibly wasting away, all her conversation was expressive of resignation, nor did she intimate, even to her friends, any solicitude respecting life.

"Of her actual preparation for death, she always spoke with diffidence. The temper, however, which she manifested, the resignation which she discovered, and, above all, the uniform and exclusive dependence which she appeared to place on Jesus, the sinner's and sufferer's friend, furnished better evidence of the reality of her piety than the most ardent hopes could otherwise have afforded."

After mentioning her continued decline, and her removal to Ballston, at her own request, without any confidence, however, of deriving benefit from the waters, the account thus proceeds and closes:

"Before she left Albany, a partial delirium was observable; this increased, and on Friday evening issued in an almost total loss of reason. In this situation she continued till about six o'clock on Saturday morning, when, nature being exhausted, she expired without a struggle and without a groan. On the same day her remains were removed to Albany, and, the day after, were interred in the Presbyterian burying-ground. Melancholy sat upon the countenances of the concourse who attended this solemnity, and every mark of both public and private respect was paid unto her ashes. Much loved shade! farewell. Thou art absent but not forgotten—the widow records thy kindness, the mourner thy sympathy, and the poor remember thy labors of love. Many friends embalm thy memory in their bosoms. They mingle their sorrows with the sorrows of thy family, and shedding tears of affection upon the cold sods which cover thee, sadly feel thine absence, and mourn thine untimely loss."

This bereavement led to a speedy change in Mr. Nott's domestic arrangements. He gave up his house and sold his furniture. His children, too young to feel conscious of their loss, were received into the houses of kinsmen and friends of the family. The little daughter was intrusted to the care of Mrs. Tillottson of Rhinebeck, who had kindly made the request in a letter, from which a single extract is subjoined:

"I entreat you therefore," she says, "to permit me to take this interesting child. I need not tell you how dear I shall hold the sacred deposit. My love and respect for her dear departed mother, besides her own claims on my most tender feelings, shall ever induce me to act up to my ideas of her best interests. Your own connections have all their own family ties. With respect to us it is otherwise. My family is small, and my daugher Janet will bring her up as the tenderest of sisters. I trust you will comply with our request."

This letter elicited from Mr. Nott the following reply:

"ALBANY, March 12, 1804.

"MY DEAR MRS. TILLOTTSON: I received your affectionate letter of this morning, in which you offer to become the guardian mother of my bereaved little daughter.

"I accept your proffered kindness with gratitude, at the same time thanking God for having raised up for her such a benefactor.

"It is an additional evidence of the verity of the word of Him who hath said, 'Leave unto me your fatherless children. I will preserve them.'

"I know something of the wants of female infancy, childhood, and youth, and how difficult it must be for a father to provide for them. I also know how much care, anxiety, and trouble, they must occasion of those who have the charge of them. I forbear, however, to mention these things. Did I suppose your offer, kind as it is, resulted from the sympathies of the moment, I might acknowledge it with gratitude, but I could not accept it. I trust, however, that the care I have seen exercised, with so much constancy and tenderness, toward orphan strangers, will not grow weary in ministering unto one, who, having now no mother, will hereafter stretch forth her little hand to you as such. I do therefore, most cordially commit to you, dear madam, this interesting and beloved child. I need not tell you how sacred a deposit I consider her.

"Could her departed mother have selected a benefactress, a guardian, a mother for her little daughter, she would, I know, have chosen her, who now offers to assume this character—and, if she still watches the destiny of her child, she mingles her gratitude with mine before the throne of the Eternal, that this dear object of our mutual love is thus provided for.

"No consideration of a worldly nature could induce me to place this child in a family, however honorable, where her morals would be in danger. Her virtue, her soul, her salvation—these are, and I pray God they ever may be, the great objects of my concern. She will enjoy the advantages of your guidance and your example ; she will have the aid of your prayers, and her afflicted father will have the consolation of knowing that she is with one who will nurture her in piety and bring her up for Jesus.

"Present my compliments to your daughter. Tell her that her solicitude concerning the disposition of my motherless children, particularly the proffers of friendship to my little one, are very gratefully accepted by me. I shall be happy in having her consider my daughter as her sister, and trust she will prove herself worthy of such love.

"That God will reward you, my dear friend, for this act of incalculable kindness, and that the sympathy which soothes my domestic sorrows may hereafter soften yours, is the sincere prayer of your affectionate friend,

"E. NOTT."

Nothwithstanding his deep sorrow, the bereaved husband continued to discharge his various duties with his accustomed diligence, although the persistent effort proved almost too much for his powers to sustain. His health became impaired, for the first time during his ministry, and his physician forbade him, for a season, to preach, or perform his wonted labors. It was feared that he might be obliged to give up preaching altogether, and under this impression, he began to turn his attention to teaching, as being an employment with which his past experience had made him familiar, and upon which he might find it desirable to enter. His plan at one time was, to open a classical school in Albany. Had he carried this project into effect, the success of it would have been assured, almost beyond doubt, but his history might have been very different. As it was, another field was opening for him, one for which his tastes and gifts were peculiarly fitted, and whose laborious and skillful cultivation was to yield the richest fruits. Before entering on this, however, there occurred an event which brought him more conspicuously before the public eye than anything previous in his history, and gave him a character for pulpit eloquence that ranked him among the foremost Christian orators of the nation.

On the 11th of July, 1804, Alexander Hamilton fell, mortally wounded, in the famous duel with Aaron Burr; his death occurring on the following day. The event produced an unexampled sensation throughout the country, and among all classes of citizens. It was felt that one of the brightest and most beneficent lights of the young nation, then just entering on its career of honor and greatness, had been suddenly quenched, and under circumstances that made the most tender appeal to the universal heart. Hamilton stood, at his death, in the very forefront of the nation's great men and benefactors. At an age when others have gone but little beyond the studies proper to boyhood he had attracted wide attention by essays on the rights of the colonies, marked by a singular compass and maturity of thought, an acuteness of logic, and a style at once nervous and polished. Before he had attained his twenty-first year, Washington had discovered his extraordinary merit, and made him one of his military family, continuing him throughout the war as one of his most trusted aids and confidential advisers. During all the years of Washington's presidency, the confidence first reposed was maintained with increasing strength; Hamilton becoming confessedly one of the leading spirits in the early cabinets, as he was one of the master-spirits, of the age. Leaving public life at the close of Washington's administration and returning to his loved profession, he rose to the first rank among American lawyers. With the highest reputation for legal learning, he was no less brilliant and eloquent as an advocate, than honored for the qualities that form the just and estimable man. As among the most influential founders of the republic, as the friend and helper of Washington, as an ingenious, original, and acute writer, whose published utterances had wrought effectively in enlightening and directing the public mind in a critical time; as patriot, soldier, statesman; as jurist, advocate, orator, and man of letters; as a citizen possessed of social qualities which commanded respect from all classes, he was preëminently the promising man in American history. Such was Alexander Hamilton, the tidings of whose sudden taking off came upon the nation with the violence of a shock, awakening not only the liveliest sorrow far and wide, but deep indignation against him who had done the deed.

Hamilton was well known, personally, in Albany. He was often there before the courts, and when the legislature was in session. His voice and face were familiar. Among his many warm friends in that city was the pastor of the Presbyterian Church, whose ministry he was wont to attend, and for whom he had cherished the highest esteem. It will readily be understood, therefore, that the tidings of Hamilton's death, and the tragical mode of it, should fall upon the citizens of Albany with special sadness, and add to the general reasons for sorrow the feeling of personal bereavement.

It was becoming that a funeral discourse should be pronounced upon a citizen so illustrious, and who from past associations might almost be regarded by the people of

Albany as one of their own number. It was equally fitting that one of the deceased statesman's personal friends, and on whose ministry he had often attended, should be called upon to perform this melancholy service. The common council, representing the wish of the citizens, requested Mr. Nott to deliver this discourse. He accepted the invitation, and on the 29th of July, delivered in the North Dutch Church of Albany, before an immense auditory, his sermon on the death of Hamilton. No doubt the peculiar circumstances, investing the occasion with unwonted solemnity and interest, rendered the audience specially susceptible ; and gave to the preacher's words, as spoken, a power and impressiveness which the bare reading may now fail to convey. But after making this allowance, it must still be confessed that the sermon has borne well the ordeal to which the critical judgment of seventy years has subjected it, that it continues to hold the place it first held as one of masterly adaptation, eloquence, and power ; and that no great public occasion in our history has been improved by a more elevated, touching, and impressive discourse.

Familiar as this sermon is, a few paragraphs from it will not be deemed amiss. The argument against duelling, though, happily, less urgently needed among us now than in other times, has lost none of its force. The code of honor, at the time that Hamilton fell a victim to its stern exactions, was firmly established, and its necessity widely recognized. To denounce it as bloody, cruel, tyrannical, and guilty, was looked upon as temerity. It required boldness, even in the preacher, thus to denounce it. It was tolerated, if not defended, in Christian communities. The false feeling, grounded on a false principle, amounted to a malady, in fact, so deep-seated, that nothing short of the sharpest and most determined treatment seemed adequate to its cure. Such is the kind of treatment it receives in this famous discourse, distinguished no less for the vigor of its argument than for the point and scathing vehemence of its denunciation of a practice which the moral sentiment of the Christian world ought long before to have frowned out of existence.

This oration was extensively read, and has been frequently reprinted. A very late edition is evidence of its continued popularity. It would, therefore, be unnecessary to give it in full in these pages, or to make any considerable extracts from it, even had not the argument, in the change of time become, in a good measure, obsolete. The portrait of Hamilton, however, may have interest. It is drawn with singular grace, skill, and discrimination ; a little too highly colored, it may be thought, in some of its parts, yet presenting a striking and life-like picture. Having spoken of him as a *man*, a *hero*, a *conqueror*, a *statesman*, the preacher sets him forth as—

> "The counsellor who was at once the pride of the bar and the admiration of the court ; whose apprehensions were quick as lightning, and whose development of truth was luminous as its path ; whose argument no change of circumstance could embarrass ; whose knowledge appeared intuitive, and who, by a single glance, and with as much facility as the eye of the eagle passes over the landscape, surveyed the whole field of controversy, saw in what way truth might be most successfully defended, and how error must be approached ; who, without ever stopping, ever hesitating, by a rapid yet stately march led the listening judge and the fascinated juror step by step, till his argument rose to demonstration, and eloquence was rendered useless by conviction ; whose talents were ever employed on the side of righteousness ; whose voice, whether at the council chamber or at the bar of justice, was virtue's consolation ; at whose approach oppressed humanity felt a secret rapture, and the heart of injured innocence leaped for joy. Where Hamilton was, in whatever sphere he moved, the friendless had a friend, the fatherless a father, and the poor man, though unable to reward his kindness, found an advocate. It was when the rich oppressed the poor, when the powerful menaced the defenceless, when truth was disregarded, or the eternal principles of justice violated, that he exerted all his strength. It was on these occasions that he sometimes soared so high, and shone with a radiance so transparent, so heavenly I had almost said, that it filled those around him with awe, and gave to him the force and authority of a prophet."

The immediate effect of this sermon was immense. The fame of it spread swiftly through the country, and the printed copy was widely circulated to meet the demand of the many eager to read it. The judgment of the time in regard to it was expressed by a contemporary journalist, who characterized it as "one of the most eloquent and highly finished productions of the kind which this country has produced." This verdict has not been reversed, and will not be, though the interest of the great occasion has passed away with the years, and cannot be revived before the minds of those now living. The preacher, at least, stood out thenceforth as the peer among the men of his order in the country, and was confessedly one of the first ornaments of the American pulpit.

The period of Mr. Nott's ministry in Albany was now approaching a close. He had labored nearly six years in his present pastorate. His congregation had flourished and grown larger and more influential with each succeeding year.

A little difficulty appears to have sprung up at one time, from a portion of the Scotch element, who held, with a pious veneration we cannot condemn, to the Old Version of the Psalms, and to the practice of lining them in the public service. The mass of the congregation regarded both with growing disfavor, and petitioned to have substituted for them the Hymn Book as approved by the General Assembly. They succeeded in their request. The new tunes, which sprang from the introduction of the new hymns, offended the rigid notions of some who had become attached to the older methods, and a few left the church. But their places were soon filled; and no serious jar was produced, either in the counsels or working of the body; while its general efficiency was promoted. The Rev. J. Ludlow, one of the late pastors of the church, in a memorial sermon preached there during his incumbency, thus speaks of Dr. Nott and his ministry:

"Perhaps, at that date, no more difficult pastoral field could have been found, except for a man of greatest brilliancy and power. The church was called the Court Church. Among the admirers and friends of Mr. Nott, and his almost constant listeners, were such men as Alexder Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Brockholst Livingston, etc. It was during his settlement here, that there was made that sad blot upon American history—the murder of Hamilton by Burr. By appointment of the town council of Albany, Mr. Nott, on the Sabbath after the news reached the capital, preached his famous sermon on Hamilton, which is still preserved and acknowledged as one of the finest specimens of American eloquence."

The influence of his ministry reached widely beyond his own church, and was far greater than the number of accessions to its membership might indicate. The transient visitors to the capital—no small number of them being persons of mark and of high intelligence, and some of them being frequent hearers—had the living truths of the Gospel presented to them, in ornate dress and well balanced sentences, indeed, but with a directness, point, and power which could hardly fail to make the great message effective. Abundant evidence was given that the leaven of this truth wrought in the minds and hearts of some, at least, of the many who sat under his preaching as occasional hearers, and who ascribed to the influence of his convincing and impressive teachings the dawn of Christian resolutions, resulting in an earnest Christian life. His catholic spirit, moreover, and fervid evangelical eloquence, gave him favor among the people of other communions, who carried with them into their several societies that genial influence so well adapted to expand the sympathies, and to elevate the standard of personal religion. His work in Albany, if not of long continuance, was earnestly and faithfully done ; and the fruits of it were such as to attest a successful ministry. His particular congregation had grown and prospered, a happy harmony pervaded its membership, and all its counsels ; every good cause calculated to benefit man and society, and make both better, was warmly supported—the liberal spirit of pastor and people diffused itself among neighboring churches, attracting respect and promoting kindly fellowship, and the church was recognized by the community as a power for good, in which all societies and all classes of citizens had a share. When Mr. Nott's ministry, therefore, was about to close in Albany, the hold which he had upon the people was very strong; and few pastors have left the scenes of their hopeful toils amid deeper regrets on the part of those who loved and honored them for their work's sake.

CHAPTER VIII.

INVITED TO SCHENECTADY.

Elected President of Union College—Reasons for the choice—Hesitation about accepting—Letter asking advice—A response—Acceptance of the appointment and removal to Schenectady—Union College in 1804—Influence of Rev. Dirck Romeyn, D.D.—Statement of Governor De Witt Clinton—The First Presidents of Union College—John Blair Smith—Letter of Dr. Nott—Jonathan Edwards, D.D.—Jonathan Maxcy, D.D.—Difficulties of the position as now entered upon—Public confidence in Mr. Nott—Letter from Samuel Nott.

A FEW weeks after the sermon on Hamilton was preached, Mr. Nott received an invitation to a different sphere of usefulness. The Presidency of Union College had become vacant through the resignation of Dr. Maxcy, and the trustees of the institution had, with great unanimity, designated Mr. Nott as a suitable person to fill the important office. The latter had now served for several years in the board of trustees, and been recognized as a prompt and efficient member. The enlightened interest he took in education, and the earnestness of his efforts for its advancement, gave weight to his counsels in that body. The cause of education was dear to him, and he was ever prompt to do what he could for its advancement. His plans and suggestions, which were at once bold and sagacious, had done much to aid and strengthen the college in its nascent struggles, to point out its best course, and the means by which it might make safe and successful progress. The high place he had come to occupy in the board, the estimation in which his services and character were held by his associates, appeared from the fact that their attention was at once turned to him, spontaneously as it were, when a proper man was needed for the vacant position. This prompt action of the Trustees may be considered as expressing the general voice as to his fitness for the office.

On receiving this overture, Mr. Nott felt the gravity of the situation. It was not a thing to be hastily decided. He needed, as he thought, the counsels of trusted friends to aid his deliberations. He accordingly addressed the following letter to several of these friends in whose wisdom and sound judgment, he had the highest confidence.

"ALBANY, August, 1804.

"DEAR SIR: The object of this letter is to request your advice in a matter of no inconsiderable importance. At the last meeting of the Board of Trustees of Union College, it appeared to be the prevailing wish of the members present to commit the care of the institution, after the removal of Dr. Maxcy, to myself.

"As no one of the board had conferred with me on this subject previous to the day of meeting, and as a refusal in case of appointment might tend to injure the institution, my friends obtained a postponement of the election for three weeks, that I might have an opportunity to reflect on the subject, to take advice, and to declare that I would not accept the appointment if such should be my determination previous to the election.

"Should I thus declare myself, it is not unlikely that the Rev. Mr. —— will be elected.

"If I know my own heart, to be useful is my great object. I think I am willing to go and to be wherever my Master directs. The questions to be decided are, whether it is prudent, at my time of life (thirty-one years), and with my inexperience, to accept a trust so important, and engage in duties so arduous; whether the prospect of usefulness is greater than in my present situation, and so much greater as to justify a removal from a people with whom I have lived for several years in harmony, among whom my labors appear in some measure to have been blessed, with whom rests the dust of a beloved partner, and to whom I am united by the strongest and tenderest ties. Into this account must be taken the state of my health, which has often, and for some time past, been such as to induce a serious apprehension that I should be obliged to resign my present charge and seek a situation favorable to exercise, which might furnish, at least, a partial respite from public speaking. Thus situated, I have thought it my duty to pause and consider.

"Soliciting an interest in your advice and in your prayers, I am, with much esteem and respect, yours truly,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

The advice solicited in this letter was freely given by the several parties applied to, who, however, did not all entirely agree in the view taken as to the propriety of the proposed removal. One of these replies, as illustrating the character of Mr. Nott's labors in Albany, his position in the church, and the estimation in which he was held by the ecclesiastical body to which he belonged, may be fittingly introduced. It was written by Dr. Samuel Miller, associate pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in New York City, in the name of his colleagues, whose signatures are appended, with his own, to the letter.

"NEW YORK, August 13, 1804.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 3d instant reached us a few days ago. We consider the subject of it important, and have, therefore, bestowed upon it much attention; but are sorry to say that, after all, we feel by no means clear in giving any decisive advice on the occasion.

"An enlightened judgment with respect to the path of duty in this case, can only be formed from an accurate knowledge of many circumstances, of which we are in a great measure ignorant. We consider your present position as one highly important to the interests of religion and of the Presbyterian Church; and we are at the same time aware, that he who presides over a literary institution, holds a station preëminently favorable to extensive usefulness. Between the two, it is only possible to judge from a thorough knowledge of the circumstances attending this particular case.

"We are not well informed concerning the situation and prospects of Union College. We are also ignorant of the department of instruction that would be assigned to the president. For, though we have no doubt that you would be able in a short time to qualify yourself for any course that might be required, yet if the duties of this station should be such as to lay you under the necessity of twelve or thirteen months' severe application to study, we should certainly consider it as worthy the serious attention of one who is already in very slender health.

"The question whether 'at your time of life, and with your inexperience,' it is prudent to accept a trust so important, and engage in duties so arduous, appears to us easily solved. We think your age a favorable circumstance. Had you lived ten or fifteen years longer out of the habit of teaching, we should regard this as a much more *serious* difficulty than your want of years.

"In a word, when we consider, on the one hand, the importance and usefulness of your ministerial labors in Albany, with the difficulty which would no doubt attend your leaving a people to whom you are bound by so many ties, and, on the other, the extensive and commanding influence in respect to religion as well as literature, which the new office in question might give to him who should fill it in such a manner, as we hope and believe you would, we can only express our fervent desire and prayer that He who metes out our lot, and in whose service, we doubt not, you wish to be engaged, may enlighten your mind on this subject, direct your decision, and dispose of your labors in such manner as shall be most for his glory.

"We are, reverend and dear sir, with much respect and esteem, your sincere friends and brethren.

"JOHN RODGERS.
"JOHN McKNIGHT.
"SAMUEL MILLER.

"The REV. MR. NOTT."

Availing himself thus of the counsels of honored and trusted friends, he at length decided to accept the position offered. His arrangements for removing to Schenectady were soon completed, and cutting loose from the ties which bound him to an endeared church, he set himself vigorously to prepare for entering at once upon a different class of duties, and upon a field in which, he well knew, success could only be won by unsparing and devoted labor.

Union College at this time was in its infancy. Nine years before it had obtained its charter from the Board of Regents. This result was effected largely by the influence and persistent efforts of the Rev. Dirck Romeyn, D.D., then pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church in the place where the new institution was to be located. The college, in fact, owes its location at Schenectady more to this gentleman's energetic labors in this direction than to any other individual influence, except that of General Schuyler, who warmly seconded, with his powerful support, the efforts of the clergyman.

This well-known gentleman, though an old resident of Albany, had become convinced that Schenectady was the most proper place for the institution. It was then regarded as the frontier town of the Great West. The force of such a reason has long since disappeared, but at that day it seemed to have great strength, and affected the minds of public spirited men very much as an effort at the present time to found similar institutions on our far remoter Western borders, then almost wholly unknown.

Dr. Romeyn was well fitted to lead in a movement of this kind. He had come to Schenectady from Hackensack, in New Jersey, in 1784, to assume charge of the Dutch Church in the former place. He entered his new field with a high reputation as a preacher and a man. He was known, not only as possessed of ripe theological attainments, but of an enterprising spirit, and of liberal and advanced views on the matter of education. On his settlement in Schenectady he found existing there very few educational advantages for the children and youth of the place beyond those furnished by the simplest elementary schools. The need of an academy was urgent, and Dr. Romeyn soon set himself to the task of supplying this deficiency. His large influence and tireless exertions succeeded in the work. He so far enlisted the people of his charge in the enterprise, that, in 1785, mainly if not wholly through their contributions, a substantial stone edifice was erected for that purpose on the corner of Union and Ferry streets, then the heart of the town. The school was opened the same year, with encouraging prospects. This was the germ of Union College, which, ten years thereafter, received its charter, and began its career in the same building, continuing to occupy it till 1804. In that year the college was removed to an edifice erected especially for its accommodation. This building, though begun in 1796, was not ready for occupation till eight years afterward, owing mainly to financial difficulties, which the friends of the college found greatly embarrassing. The new edifice was constructed of stone, and cost, with the grounds attached to it, about sixty thousand dollars, a large sum to provide for in those unpretentious days. Its position on Union street was then regarded as a central and advantageous site. It was three stories high, one hundred and fifty feet in length by sixty in width, and was regarded as a stately and imposing structure for its time, at least for the unostentatious city* of which it formed the chief architectural ornament. Its accommodations were considered sufficient for its needs: its rooms for professors and students, its chapel and library, being all constructed on a plan deemed liberal for the times, yet looking to future growth. As the number of students, however, rapidly increased, larger room was soon required, and a dormitory was built in 1809, in the rear of the college building. To Rev. Dr. Romeyn, as has been shown, Schenectady was mainly indebted for the first academy established in the town. In the procuring of the charter of Union College his enterprise was hardly less conspicuous; while in fixing the location of the institution at Schenectady his influence was more effective than that of any other person. He had able coadjutors to second the efforts he put forth to carry his favorite purpose into execution, among whom, as has been noted, was General Schuyler, whose high character gave great weight to his advocacy of Schenectady as the proper place for the proposed institution, especially as efforts had been made to establish it at Albany, the ancient residence of the Schuyler family. Governor George Clinton also took the same side of the question. The citizens of Schenectady, therefore, justly proud, as they have always been, of the honor conferred upon their town by its close association with Union College, owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Romeyn, and to these distinguished gentlemen, for the efforts which resulted in planting the institution where it now stands. The character of Dr. Romeyn's work and influence in this matter is pleasantly set forth in a letter written by Governor De Witt Clinton to the Rev. John B. Romeyn, D.D., son of the Schenectady minister, and at that time pastor of the Cedar Street Presbyterian Church in New York City. The letter is found in Dr. Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit."

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* Schenectady, though settled almost as early as New York and Albany, became a city in 1798, the population numbering, at that time, about three thousand.

> "When the legislature met in New York, about thirty years ago, your excellent father attended the Regents of the University to solicit the establishment of a college at Schenectady. Powerful opposition was made at Albany. I was the secretary of the University, and I had the opportunity of observing the characters of the men concerned in this application, and the whole of its progress to ultimate success. I have no doubt that the weight and respectability of your father's character procured a decision in favor of Schenectady. Governor (George) Clinton and General Schuyler, almost always in opposition to each other, united on this question. I had frequent occasion, from my official position, to see your father, and what I have said of him was an expression of the head as well as of the heart, in favor of eminent merit. There was something in his manner peculiarly dignified and benevolent, calculated to create veneration as well as affection, and it made an impression on my mind that will never be erased."

During the nine years that the college had been in operation it had had three presidents. The first was the Rev. John Blair Smith, D.D., a clergyman of the Presbyterian Church, who was widely known both as a successful teacher and as a forcible and eloquent preacher. He was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, June 12, 1756. At the age of sixteen he graduated at the college of New Jersey, and, having chosen the ministry as his profession, and pursued a regular course in theology, found his first field of ministerial labor in Virginia. In 1779, when only twenty-three years of age, he succeeded his brother, the Rev. Samuel

S. Smith, as president of Hampden and Sidney College, taking pastoral charge at the same time of the Presbyterian Society located there, of which his brother had also been pastor. He held this position ten years, retiring from it that he might devote himself more entirely to the work of the ministry. Two years thereafter he was called to the Pine Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, and with such cordial unanimity, that he consented to become its pastor. He accordingly settled in this important field in 1791 ; his ministry here proving greatly acceptable, and his influence wide-spread and beneficent. So much was he beloved by his people, that the invitation he received in 1795 from the trustees of Union College, to become its president, was looked upon by them very much in the light of a personal calamity, It came to him, however, so strongly fortified by reasons for his accepting it, that duty prevailed against predilection, and he consented to make what could only be regarded as a personal sacrifice. He left a well-established position to take charge of an infant institution, where his success, and even his support, were far from being assured. The whole number of students for the first year was less than twenty. The first graduating class in 1797 was composed of only three persons, one of whom, the Rev. Joseph Sweetman, appeared and addressed the throng of alumni gathered in 1845 to celebrate the half century of the life of the college. A brief extract deserves a place, as characteristic of the venerable man long held in esteem as the college's oldest living representative, and also as matter of interest connected with the earliest history of the institution.

"A board of trustees composed of men of distinction and influence was appointed. Dr. John Blair Smith of Philadelphia was elected president. He accepted the office, and in a few weeks arrived and entered upon the duties of the presidency. . . .

"The first commencement was in May, 1797. The place of holding it the old Dutch Church, now demolished, occupying a position in the centre of the street, east of the Mohawk Bank. There, within its massive and venerable walls, sparingly receiving the light from without through the small squares of glass, on a cloudy and chilly day, the first Wednesday in May, 1797, was celebrated the first commencement of Union College. But it was May day, and the spring time of Union College, not the dog-days of later years, when we are sweltered with heat and panting for air. And we talked of flowers and zephyrs, and the loveliness of the renovated year, and it was confidently announced in the Latin salutatory, *Nunc est formosissimus annus*—wind and weather to the contrary notwithstanding. But some were there who felt they were about to leave revered instructors and beloved companions. The number of graduates was few indeed; only three, two of them surviving, one of whom now tells the tale and remembers well the day. All was new to a large portion present. A general interest was felt. The house was filled to overflowing. Among other distinguished citizens, Governor Jay, and Stephen Van Rensselaer, lieutenant-governor, were present. Dr. Smith, the president, acquitted himself admirably. His parting address to the graduates was pointed, parental, affectionate. The whole audience was moved, and when he turned to speak of the future, he lifted up the assembly to new thoughts and prospects of Union College; when it should rise with the rising country, increase in numbers, extend its influence, acquire a name, win the confidence of the community, and command the respect and patronage of the State. The day passed happily off, and all withdrew apparently satisfied, and in the belief that Union College would accomplish beneficial purposes in years to come."

In 1799, Dr. Smith returned to his former charge in Philadelphia. He had given the people there reason to hope, when he left them, that he might yet resume his former position. He found his greatest delight in the pastoral work, though his labors in the other sphere had proved anything but unsuccessful. Brief as was his college administration, it had been at once efficient and useful. He had won in it the regard and confidence of his associates and pupils, not less than the marked favor of the Christian communities by whom his character was best known. A letter written in 1857, by Dr. Nott, for Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit," gives some interesting particulars illustrative of the services and character of this first president of Union College. The portrait, as drawn by a successor who knew him so well, is a pleasant one, and many will like to look upon it.

Extract of letter from Dr. Nott to Dr. Sprague, written April 10, 1857:

"Coming as I did from Connecticut, where the discourses of the clergy, were for the most part argumentative, carefully written, and calmly and deliberately read from the pulpit, the impassioned, extemporaneous efforts of Dr. Smith filled me alike with admiration and amazement. His addresses to the hopes of Christians were most cheering; his appeals to the consciences of sinners, terrific. He was the dispenser of the consolations of the Gospel to the righteous, the Boanerges of the law to the wicked. He was ever ready, ever willing, to preach, and commanded the rapt attention of the audience he addressed. His preparations for the pulpit were meditation and prayer. He seldom wrote his sermons; at most he wrote only a few brief hints on a slip of paper, which, as he rose in the pulpit, he placed under the thumb of his left hand, in which he held a small pocket Bible, which he raised instinctively to meet his eye, when he came to a new topic of discourse. Whether he read the hints written when he so raised the Bible, or whether it was merely a habit, necessary to the free workings of his mind, it would seem was uncertain; for, on one occasion, when delivering an impassioned passage, the little brief slipped from beneath the thumb that held it, sailed away, and finally lodged on the floor of the middle aisle. Not the least embarrassed by this incident, the doctor tore a small piece from a newspaper in his pocket, placed it under his thumb in the little pocket Bible in his left hand, and went on with his discourse, raising the Bible to his eye as frequently as before, and gathering from it apparently the same inspiration.

"In private life Dr. Smith was remarkable for his hospitality, and his conversational powers. His opinions on slavery were substantially those of Washington, Jefferson, and other distinguished contemporary statesmen of the South. But though he spoke of it freely in conversation, and seemed to anticipate the divisions it has since occasioned in the Church, I do not recollect to have heard him allude to it in the pulpit, where he seemed to know nothing but Christ and him crucified.

"He informed me that during the prevalence of that terrible epidemic, the yellow fever, in Philadelphia, in 1793, he remained in the city, kept his church open, preaching every Sabbath, and to audiences such as he had never addressed before.

"He left his charge in Philadelphia, chiefly on account of ill health, and under the promise, if he ever recovered, to return to them again. He did recover his health, and fulfilled his promise to his former charge; but he returned there to die. There rest his ashes, and there his sainted spirit ascended to his God. Though he left no published works of consequence, as memorials of his worth, behind him, his memory yet lives on earth, and will live, honored and revered and loved by all who knew him, among whom are none who remember him with greater affection and veneration than the writer of this brief memorial.

"Very truly yours,
"ELIPHALET NOTT."

The vacancy in the college produced by Dr. Smith's resignation, was filled by the election of Jonathan Edwards, D.D., son of that Jonathan Edwards who is recognized, abroad as well as at home, as the prince of American divines. Dr. Edwards, when chosen to preside over Union College, had been settled in the ministry about thirty years. Twenty-six years of this period had been passed at White Haven, Connecticut, in charge of the Congregational Church there, and the remaining years in Colebrook, in the same State, from which place he removed to Schenectady on accepting the presidency of Union College. He came to the college with a high reputation as a theologian, excelling especially in the department of metaphysics, inheriting, as it would seem, a predilection for a class of studies toward which only minds of a peculiar cast feel themselves attracted. He was a scholar ripe and good, distinguished for his literary and scientific attainments, as well as those strictly theological. His knowledge, too, was precise and accurate, and so arranged as to be perfectly under his control. As a speaker he lacked the magnetism that attracts popular audiences, and in manner was grave and reserved to a degree that caused him to be regarded as unsociable. His sermons were marked by clear statement, and deep thought, and thorough discussion of whatever subject he undertook to treat, avoiding everything like declamation or rhetorical adornment. His mind was thoroughly well furnished, and he loved to impart to others, who really sought to gain knowledge, the stores he had laborously acquired. High expectations were formed by the friends of the college, that the administration of one so scholarly and cultivated would be of signal benefit to the interests of the institution. And so it promised to be, and probably would have been, had the time been allowed him to develop and apply his plans of government and instruction. But his work in the college was a short one. He died on the 1st of August, 1801, before two years had passed since his administration began. He was sincerely mourned by all who knew his sterling worth, and who honored him not less for his blameless life and unostentatious piety, than for his unquestioned learning and ability.

The third president of Union College was the Rev. Jonathan Maxcy, D. D., of Providence, R. I. He was born in Attleboro, Massachusetts, September 2, 1768; and when he entered on the duties of his new position at Schenectady, in 1802, was barely thirty-four years old. Having graduated at Brown University in 1787, he was appointed tutor shortly thereafter, continuing in this capacity four years. In 1792 he was chosen president of that college, officiating at the same time as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Providence. He was a man of brilliant talents, possessed of elegant tastes and culture, and as a pulpit orator ranked among the foremost of his times. His administrative ability, too, was held in high repute, and Brown University, under him, achieved a wide reputation, especially in the department of belles-lettres and elocution, on which President Maxcy bestowed much attention, and for the teaching of which he possessed unusual qualifications. Some slight objection to his being called to the charge of Union College was raised in certain directions, on the ground of his being a Baptist, the institution having been mainly established, and being then controlled, by persons belonging to other denominations. The college, however, was unsectarian, and designed to be so, as its very name proclaimed, and the objection therefore, received, as it deserved, but little attention. One or two other objections were also started against Dr. Maxcy's appointment, such as his being a little too broad and liberal in some of his religious views; but these shared the same fate. Having accepted the trustees' invitation, he was in due time inducted into the office of the presidency. Mr. Nott, as one of the trustees was mainly instrumental in securing the services of Dr. Maxcy to the college; the latter, pending the negotiations that resulted in his entering on the post, consulting him unreservedly on all matters relating to the new sphere of labor, and on which he sought to obtain information before beginning his important work. When fairly installed, the new president discharged his duties ably and efficiently; his reputation as an eloquent preacher, as a presiding officer of affluent resources, and a genial Christian gentleman, brightening to the close of his administration. His term of service also proved to be quite brief. The presidency of South Carolina College, at Columbia, was offered to him in 1804. His health had become somewhat impaired, and he judged that the milder climate of the South would tend to recruit it. This, with perhaps some feeling of discouragement at the financial condition and prospects of the college, determined him to accept the place to which he was invited. He removed accordingly to South Carolina, and took the charge offered him, remaining in it till his death, which occurred sixteen years after.

These were the men who, for nine years following the organization of Union College, had successively filled its presidential chair. They had helped to bring it into prominent notice, and to strengthen the expectations cherished by its founders of a prosperous future. It was clearly apprehended that a strong man was needed now, to occupy the vacant post, and to carry forward successfully the work which the pioneer presidents had begun. The choice of Mr. Nott for the situation evinces what views the trustees had of his being the right man. The caution which he himself displayed in undertaking the work, his consultations with others, the care with which he weighed the reasons for and against the proposed step, show how keenly alive he was to the nature of the expectations which the public had formed. He knew well that the position was one of difficulty, and that to succeed in it would task his energies to the utmost. Notwithstanding the interest that the college had inspired, and the able hands which had helped to shape and prosper its work, its success was far from assured. Its finances were not in a satisfactory, or even hopeful condition. The public confidence, which ever grows slowly, needed to be established. The location of the college was not such as to satisfy some influential parties who had reluctantly yielded assent to what their judgment scarcely approved. Large pecuniary aid was needed from the State, and must be procured, in order to carry out effectively the plans devised for the proper endowment, and the practical working, of the institution. Each former president had held his office for too short a time to mature any system that might be regarded as fixed, by reason of its acknowledged excellence. The fact itself of the frequent change of presiding officer, tended to weaken confidence. The number of students, too, was small, showing that no wide and strong attraction yet existed in the college to draw young men to its halls.

In order to secure to it attention and wide support, as an educational power in the State, it needed to be built up, and made worthy to rank with older and well-endowed institutions, the benefits conferred by which had made them a praise throughout the land. This was a task of no ordinary magnitude, but which skill, energy, and perseverance might count upon achieving in time. The young president fully understood its difficulty, and in undertaking it he stood ready to exert his best faculties. All who were familiar with his character, knew that he would not be likely to spare himself, nor shrink from any duty, however burdensome, that might be imposed. He knew the force of his own favorite motto, "*Perseverantia omnia vincit,*" and his own practice served to exemplify its truth and wisdom. We learn something of the estimate in which his character was held by those most intimate with him, and what prospects of success he was thought to have in his new enterprise, from a letter written to him by his brother Samuel, after he had entered on his work at Schenectady. The Franklin clergyman, by virtue of his twenty years' seniority, and also of his former relation of preceptor to Eliphalet, was wont to express himself with much freedom in his letters to the latter, to criticise his opinions, and sometimes his sermons, with perfect unreserve. A specimen of this latter kind of criticism, as showing the openness of the writer, I will retain, though it refers to an occasion that has already been surveyed.

"FRANKLIN, December 24, 1804.

"DEAR BROTHER: The longer I live, the more sensible I am that I live in a busy world. I have long been seeking for an opportunity to congratulate you upon your induction into the *Presidency of Union College.*

"God puts up and puts down whomsoever he pleases. I hope, as you have seen fit to accept of the appointment, and entered upon the duties of the office that you will discharge them with fidelity.

"Some think you have done wrong, and others right, in leaving Albany. With respect to your motives in doing it, you must stand or fall to your own Master. Some think that though you exert yourself ever so much, you never can make the college flourish for any great length of time. Then, they say, it does not stand in *the right place.* I am not enough acquainted to have a judgment of my own. As you have accepted of the presidency, however, I sincerely wish you to do well, and hope you will constantly feel the importance of looking for direction to that God who has exalted you. Your station is a very important one. Church and State will feel the good or bad effects of your conduct. The young gentlemen will form themselves much after the model you hold up to their view. Knowing your ambition, I fear for your health, and hope you will take all due pains to preserve it. If that should remain good, you are at an age in which you may make *great improvement.*

"I have been glad to see, by your publications, that you improve in your composition. Your sermon on the death of General Hamilton was the best of anything I have seen, though that, I think, was not without fault. There is one you have fallen into which is common among the pathetic writers and speakers of the day, and which many serious people, and some of them good judges of propriety, think partakes strongly of profanity—I mean your frequent interjections, "O my God!" "Good God!" with other similar exclamations, far too common to stand the test of criticism, though not perhaps ill calculated to render you *popular* in your part of the country. In general the sermon is well spoken of by good judges. . . . .

"Yours, etc.,

"SAMUEL NOTT."

These blunt criticisms were taken in good part by the younger brother. No man, indeed, could well have greater self-control than Mr. Nott found habitual to him, nor greater equanimity of temper and gentleness of speech when sharp assailing words would be likely, in others, to provoke an angry retort. The "soft answer that turneth away wrath," formed for him a maxim the philosophy of which he perfectly understood while he seemed to practise upon it uniformly as a principle of action rooted in his convictions. In no one of his letters that I have happened to see, does there occur a single sharp or irritating sentence, or any harsh or unkind reflection upon the conduct or motives of others. In his social intercourse this amiable trait was equally marked, and helps, no doubt, to explain the secret of that conversational charm which so often won men to his opinions.

IX.

PRESIDENCY OF UNION COLLEGE, 1804-1820.

Location of Union College—Schenectady in the olden time—Is separated from Albany—What the college was in 1804—Large growth during the first decade of Dr. Nott's administration—His policy and plans—Letter to his brother—Encouraging prospects—College faculty—Another letter to Samuel Nott—Renders frequent preaching services—Large liberality in his Christian views and intercourse—Preaches in Boston, and in New York—Account by one who heard him in the latter place—Sermon before the General Assembly—Extract—Preaching in country parishes—Incident of impromptu service—Devotion to his duties in college—His manner in class-room.

THE location of Union College at Schenectady was not effected, as already remarked, without a pretty severe struggle. A strong influence was exerted in favor of Albany, and but for the convincing arguments of Dr. Romeyn, aided by the powerful influence of General Schuyler, the latter city would have been selected. The prevailing reasons assigned for the former locality were: greater seclusion on the part of the students; greater cheapness of living while pursuing their college course, with smaller outlay for the land with which it was proposed to surround the college buildings. If this last were the main reason, it was certainly not without force, for a large tract of land in Schenectady could be procured for an inconsiderable sum, at the close of the last century. At this period, Schenectady, though rejoicing in a city charter, had less than four thousand inhabitants.*

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* "By the State census of 1796, the township of Schenectady contains three thousand four hundred and seventy-two inhabitants, of whom six hundred and eighty-three are electors and three hundred and eight-one slaves."—*Munsell's Annals*, vol. iii. p. 225.

In point of settlement, it is one of the oldest places in the State, and indeed, in the United States; for, previous to 1620, a number of persons of Holland lineage planted themselves here for the purpose of carrying on the fur trade. The first grant to settlers was made in 1661, conditioned on their purchasing the land from the Indians. The purchase was not completed till 1672, and the deed given bears the signatures of four Mohawk chiefs. From this period till 1690 the place slowly grew in population. In that year it contained "eighty well-built and well-furnished houses, and formed an oblong surrounded by a palisade, which could be entered by only two gates." On the night of February 8, 1690, a party of French and Indians surprised the place, the inhabitants all sleeping in fancied security, and the two gates being left wide open. The fort within the enclosure, where a small garrison was stationed, was stormed, set on fire, and its occupants slaughtered. A fearful massacre of the villagers at once ensued, lasting for two hours. Sixty-three of the inhabitants fell before the fury of the ruthless assailants, and nearly an equal number were made prisoners. Among the slain was Rev. Peter Tesschenmaker, pastor of the Dutch Church. The flames completed what the bullet and tomahawk had begun, and soon most of the houses lay in ashes. The property which the fire did not consume was made a prey by the bloody captors, who, with their prisoners and whatever they could carry, set out on their return to Canada, having caused a loss to the luckless village of more than four hundred thousand livres.*

Gradually the place rose from its ashes; and as its numbers increased, an aspect of order and thrift greeted the eye. The location of Schenectady, in one of the richest valleys of the State, is picturesque and pleasant. It was settled, as was its neighbor Albany, by people of Holland ancestry, who, for a long series of years, formed the predominating element of the population, and stamped upon the place the strong peculiarities which marked all the early Holland settlements in the country. Schenectady remained a part of Albany county till 1809, when by legislative act it was set off from the former and assumed a separate municipal existence. At this period the lands around the city, which now command a high price, could be obtained for a small sum per acre, and the purchase of the considerable tract which Union College needed for its fitting establishment, and now holds, was thus brought within the reach of its then small financial resources.

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* Brodhead's "History of New York;" "Munsell's, Annals."

When President Nott entered upon his new office, the number of students in the college was not more than forty. The class of 1803 had graduated seventeen—the highest number that, in any one year, had yet gone forth from the institution. There was no increase to this until four years after the administration of the new president had begun, or till 1808, when eighteen graduates received diplomas. The next year recorded twenty-nine, the whole number in the several classes being about one hundred, or more than double the number belonging to the college in 1804. The graduating classes continued at nearly the same figure till 1813, when it ran up to forty-six. The whole number in college, in the several classes, at this time, was not less than two hundred, or five times as many as there were in the first year of Dr. Nott's presidency. It thus appears, that during the first decade of President Nott's administration, the number of students who had entered the college, pursued the prescribed course of instruction, and received at its close the diploma awarded to full graduates, had increased five-fold. From this showing the proof is clear, that the college, under its present direction, was winning its way into popular favor, and was taking a prominent place among the older and better equipped institutions around it. The scientific course—which was a plan originated by this college, to enable young men who did not wish to study the ancient classical tongues, but preferred a course embracing studies that would qualify them for practical life—was not yet fully matured. When it became so, some years after, its success was at once assured, and a still larger increase was witnessed in the numbers of those attending the institution.

The prosperous condition of the college, as set forth in these statements, shows that the hand now holding the helm was at once skillful and vigorous. The president, indeed, had brought to the work some rare and valuable qualifications. His experience in teaching, though not great, had familiarized him with the practical work both of instructing and governing. His love for the work made it a pleasure. In his zeal for education, he had deeply reflected upon the best methods of making instruction attractive, and of securing the thorough interest and attention of the pupil. He had seen the defects of some of the older systems, and satisfied himself as to the best mode in which they might be remedied. Besides this, he had great insight into character, seeming to know instinctively the precise treatment which young men of variant temper and disposition required. He had rare tact, too, in winning his way to the confidence of youth, and in dealing with those who, under a more rigorous and peremptory treatment, had been stubbornly refractory. In his intercourse with students, he knew how to blend dignity with familiarity, and while they were not repelled by unbending stiffness, or an air of factitious importance, or a morose severity of manner, they shrank from venturing on undue liberties of speech or demeanor in his presence. His government was parental ; his treatment of students was marked by courtesy, by kindness, and by the evidence of a deep interest in the well-being of those who sat before him as learners. But the parental kindness was not of that lax and nerveless sort which invited insubordination. His pupils understood well the limits beyond which it was not safe to pass, and that the reins were held with a firm grasp, able and sure to check the least indecorum. It was Dr. Nott's purpose to incite the student to aim at a high standard, to cherish a love for the study necessary to attain it. He had but little regard for the obedience, or the good order, or the studiousness, that was secured by compulsion. He would have them hearty, and all the more effective by reason of their heartiness. A letter written to his brother Samuel, within a year or two after entering on his then present duties, affords some insight into his mode of proceeding, and the results which this course of treatment was already producing. The superior advantages which he claims for his own college as compared with those of others, may be ascribed to the enthusiasm with which a young presiding officer may be naturally supposed to have regarded the aspect of a work in which his whole heart was enlisted.

"DEAR BROTHER: You have before this been informed of my removal from Albany, and have doubtless indulged in some reflections on the difficulties and dangers of such a procedure. It is, however, past, and numbered among those painful events of which I can never think without sorrow. What a changing, uncertain world this is. The varying scene confuses me. I hardly know whether the part I seem to act, the blessings in which I seem to participate, and the sorrows I am called to suffer, be a dream or a reality. My situation is more pleasant and agreeable than I expected. Its pleasantness, however, springs not from society, for I participate in none, but is that of the passing traveller.

"What is before me I know not. My prospects of usefulness are extending, but those of my happiness are sadly clouded. I thank God that I have enough to do. Were it otherwise, I fear I should be less contented than I am, and I am now far, far too little so.

"Our college, under the new system, is increasing fast in numbers, and perhaps it would not be extravagant to say, in respectability. Some of our professors are men of the highest standing, and the system we have adopted cannot fail to excite the attention and command the approbation of the public. Our students, like those of the Moravian schools, are to be entirely separated from the great world. The president is to lodge in college, and board in common with his family, as are all the other officers of the faculty. Each class belongs to the family of the officer who instructs them; and, in our dining hall is preserved all the decorum, ceremony, and politeness of refined domestic life. Not the least disorder is allowed in or about the edifice.

From prayers, from church, from recitation, such a thing as absence is unknown. The week is completely filled up with collegiate, the Sabbath with religious, exercises. On the latter day no student ever goes from the yard except to church, and even then he walks with his professor in procession, sits with him, and with him returns. Perhaps no college has ever furnished such complete security to the manners and morals of youth, or a course more likely to ensure a thorough education. Strangers visit us with interest, and leave us, astonished at the order, punctuality, and diligence which prevail. By the new arrangement, board has been reduced from $2.50 to $1.45 per week, and we expect a still further reduction. An establishment of this kind for boys, in this country is new, and I flatter myself (if the Legislature will grant about one hundred thousand dollars more to carry it fully into effect, which, from the interest the leading characters are taking in it, there is reason to believe they will do) it will be attended with the most extensive and salutary consequences. I say extensive, for I suppose other parents feel a solicitude similar to what I feel, and I should not hesitate to send a son to the ends of the United States, to place him in that state of security, and in the enjoyment of those advantages, which our youth enjoy.

"Wishing you every blessing, I am,

"Affectionately yours,

"E. NOTT."

Aside from the pleasing picture it presents, this letter has an interest as showing the difference between Dr. Nott's earlier ideas and the later or more mature view he took of college discipline. In truth, this monastic system, as we may call it, was chiefly the work of his predecessors. It was the favorite plan of Prof. Allen, a rigid disciplinarian, as he was a very exact scholar. The president, however, seems to have been warmly interested in its trial. There is, indeed, a charm about it which will lead many readers still to give it the preference. Dr. Nott's experience showed him the advantages of a method having less restraint, and more winning by its liberality. The change, however, weakened, in no respect, his consistent adherence to the underlying principle: the promotion of the spiritual health, whether by a closer seclusion, or a larger freedom. It was with him a cardinal principle that sound morals are the only safe basis of a sound education, and that without this ground-work, advance in knowledge, is only an injury to the individual and to community. He speaks of his system, combining, as it did, moral and intellectual improvement, as yielding excellent fruits, whilst receiving warm approval from those best able to judge of its successful working. Under the circumstances, we should not be surprised at the warmth of the eulogy he bestows upon his loved college, thriving so well, as it seemed, under the plans of his devising. The claims, however, which he puts forth to the novelty of the system will be taken with some abatement, while the tone of confidence with which he asserts the superiority of his college to all others, in the respects mentioned, will receive the charitable construction due to the utterance of a president still young, ardent in love for his work, and sanguine in looking at the effect of plans which, after all, had been tested for too short a time to warrant the exultant claims put forth in their behalf.

When Dr. Nott became President of Union College, there was only one member of the faculty who was a full professor, viz., Benjamin Allen, whose department was mathematics and natural philosophy. There were four tutors, viz., John Younglove, Jacob Brodhead, Cornelius D. Westbrook, and Thomas Dunlap, who instructed respectively in the classics, in belles-lettres, in political economy, and the several other branches that then formed part of the established course. These tutors resigned their places in the college shortly after, with the view of entering on fixed professional pursuits. They were soon succeeded by other skillful teachers, among whom may be named Rev. Thomas Macauley, afterward successor to Dr. Mason in New York, and eminent as a learned divine and a most eloquent as well as successful preacher; Rev. Thomas C. Brownell, who became Bishop of Connecticut; Count Pierre G. Reynaud, a refugee from the revolutions in France, professor of the French language; Rev. Henry Davis, afterward President of Hamilton College, and Frederick R. Hassler, who succeeded Professor

Allen in the chair of mathematics and natural philosophy in 1809. Reference to Professor Hassler is made by President Nott in a letter to his brother, giving some account of the growth and prosperity of the college. This letter speaks also of his declining an overture from the Park Street Church of Boston to become its pastor. Other refusals of a similar kind, one of a call to Whitesborough, New York, and another, of an invitation to Philadelphia, show his determination to continue in the work, for which he regarded himself as particularly fitted, and in which his labors were becoming increasingly successful. The letter dated April 14, 1810, after referring to some domestic sorrow which had befallen his brother, continues thus:

"With respect to college, it has never been in as good a state, or as agreeable to me, as it is at present. The mathematical professorship is filled by a learned Swiss—F. R. Hassler—confessedly the ablest mathematician and astronomer that was ever in America. He is the celebrated correspondent of De Le Sand, and goes through a course of lectures and experiments in the manner of the most approved European professors. We have three other professors and four tutors. We have a professor in Europe, who will return with a chemical apparatus and an addition to our library, in September. Nevertheless, I would return to the ministry, if I thought my health would stand it, and other circumstances would permit.

"When the commissioners came on, with the call from Boston, I told them at once that I could not accept of it; that it was impossible for me to leave the college under present circumstances; and besides, that I did not like the life which a man must live in the city. Some days after, I received a letter from S——, which communicated to me the information that the church was divided. This had no other effect than to confirm my confidence in the correctness of the decision I had already made. Soon after this, I received an informal, but unanimous call, accompanied by arguments and entreaties, to which it was painful to be obliged to reply; but which produced no change in my conviction of duty. I therefore answered in terms so decisive that they ought to have put the question at rest. Since that, however, I have received another letter, which informs me that another commission is to be sent to me, to see if they cannot offer arguments that will induce me to change my determination. Most of my friends, except Dr. Dwight, have thought, with you, that I ought not to leave the college. I have no idea that I shall. It is not probable that any arguments can be presented, that have not been already taken into consideration. The deputation will not perhaps come on, as I wrote immediately that it was a measure that would in no probability effect any change in my determination. The fact is, that I never did like the city; though I loved my congregation in Albany, and was happy with them. I long for retirement and rest, and would sooner go into solitude than into a throng, for the rest of my days, if I could, consistently with my duty, escape from responsibility. I mean that kind of responsibility which every man must feel who holds a public station. Besides, I am not fit for the place. It requires a man (besides extraordinary requisites) of manners and management, a man skilled in the subtleties of metaphysics, and who loves, and is familiar with disputation. I mean, this will be expected by the people; and if a man does not possess the talents and disposition to attack and parry with dexterity, he will not be thought to be of the right cast for the place and for the times. You will not understand that I give it as my opinion that such ought to be the character of the man who shall fill the new church. Cowper has drawn one of very different features, and one which I should by far prefer. I apprehend, however, that the materials for a theological warfare are preparing at the East; and a warfare in which I have neither talents nor the inclination to engage.

"Affectionately yours,

"E. NOTT."

While Dr. Nott—the Doctorate of Divinity had been conferred upon him in 1805 by the College of New Jersey—thus resolutely declined reëntering upon the pastoral work, he performed no small amount of pulpit service. Even if his health had been sufficiently restored to warrant his return to the pulpit, and he had felt himself quite adequate to performing fully the duties which the pastoral office demands, he would hardly have abandoned, at this time, the work before him. To this he felt himself adapted in a special manner, and drawn by special attraction. He regarded himself as far better qualified for the office of a teacher of youth than for that of a pastor, and this sentiment became stronger with him as his experience became larger. At the same time he did not underrate the influence which he might exert by occasional preaching, nor fail to appreciate the duty resting upon him to put forth this influence as often as there arose a proper call for it. He accordingly rendered frequent services, when requested to do so by the neighboring churches and pastors. His liberal spirit was everywhere recognized, and when invitations came to him from evangelical churches and denominations other than his own, his readiness to comply was in no way affected by the peculiar badge of the religious body making the request. He entered a Methodist or Baptist pulpit as unhesitatingly as a Presbyterian or Congregational, and the people of these several societies appeared to listen to him with equal consideration and interest. There was not the slightest admixture of the bigot or narrow sectarian in his composition. His teaching inculcated the great charities of the Gospel, and breathed its divinely wide and free offer of mercy, as overriding all petty denominational barriers, and making its appeal to all the needy and erring of the human family. He had his distinctive and decided preferences. He had also his reasons, and was ready to give them, for leaving the church in which he had been nurtured, and becoming a Presbyterian. But while yielding a cordial adherence to the Presbyterian system, and becoming thoroughly identified with the interests of that body, he was at the farthest possible remove from the exclusivism of the sectarian partisan. He regarded the separating barrier between the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, as very slight indeed, and there was no period, when, had duty prompted, he could not have heartily returned to the fold he had left, and performed pastoral functions there with the utmost unreserve. It was a pleasure to him to revisit his native New England, to take by the hand the honored and beloved brethren whose home and work were there, and preach the cross from their pulpits. Among the places he visited from time to time, and where he exercised his ministerial gifts, was Boston. Passing a Sunday there, on one of these visits, about a year after his connection with the college, he preached with great acceptance in Brattle Street Church. A note of his service, bearing date of September, 1805, was entered in the diary of its pastor, the Rev. Joseph S. Buckminster, to the following effect. "President Nott preached in Brattle Street Church. The fullest audience ever known there, except on ordination day. Epigram made on him by Josiah Quincy:

> "Delight and instruction have people, I wot,
> Who in seeing NOT see, and in hearing, hear NOT."

In New York pulpits also, he was frequently invited to officiate. His appearance in that city, on one of these occasions, a few years after his settlement in Schenectady, is described by an eye-witness, who was enabled to recount, long years after listening to him, the effect produced upon himself by a sermon of Dr. Nott, delivered in the pulpit of Rev. Dr. Mason, then one of the foremost orators and divines of the country. Between these eminent men a slight estrangement had taken place growing out of some unfriendly comments alleged to have been made by Dr. Mason upon the sermon on the death of Hamilton. Their relations had previously been intimate, and founded on mutual esteem. But cordial intercourse had been interrupted for a little time, only to be renewed and strengthend when proper explanations showed what slight ground there really was for serious alienation. The subjoined account which appeared in the "Journal of Commerce," shortly after Dr. Nott's death, recalls the ineffaceable and still vivid impression made upon the writer half a century before. It presents a lively picture of what Dr. Nott was, in person, style of address, and pulpit force, at that day, and the popular interest which attended his ministration.

"In regard to pulpit eloquence, the late Dr. Nott had but few equals. His person had not the commanding dignity of Mason, nor had his voice the same compass and power. Still the former was prepossessing and the latter melodious and of varied intonations. His voice had a peculiarity which would be difficult to describe. It seemed, more than usual, to partake of the mental idiosyncrasy of the speaker. It was tremulous with sensation, a sort of vital vehicle of thought. It awakened at once great interest in the hearer. He could sit and listen as to one of Beethoven's symphonies.

Whenever Dr. Nott was announced to preach in New York, the church where he officiated was sure to be crowded. Before the hour for commencing the service, every part of the building was filled with an expectant throng. On these occasions some of his greatest pulpit efforts were put forth. The rapt audience was borne away on the current of well-expressed thought, and sometimes, when the subject related to the glories that await the just, it seemed as if angelic hosts were gathering around to share in the pleasing excitement.

"He had much *manner*, so to speak. He was full of action, gesticulating in a way to give emphasis to his ideas.* In him the rhetorician prevailed over the logician. He was fond of descriptive sermons. His fine imagination revelled in the portraitures of the Scripture saints, or in sketching some oriental picture of moral beauty. He was great also in the defence of evangelical religion; and dealt heavy blows against rationalism and other forms of infidelity."

After alluding to the misunderstanding, and consequent brief estrangement referred to above, the account proceeds:

"But two such good, as well as great men could not always be held in cold reserve. The breach was healed, and the friends of both rejoiced in the cordial reunion.

"The writer was present on the first Sabbath evening when the great champions met and exchanged courtesies in the pulpit. They sat side by side, and looked the happier under the circumstances of their renewed intimacy.

"Dr. Mason led in the devotional services, with his usual unction and appropriateness. He then gave place to his friend, who rose and announced the text, *'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'* It might have been called a splendid, though an almost too ornate sermon. He drew a vivid picture of the first death. He invested it with all the gloom and grandeur which such a first shock of mortality must have presented. Within the guarded gate of Eden there was life. Outside that gate lay the Valley of the Shadow of Death. All nature shuddered at the contrast. He carried us to the tomb of Adam. He sketched it in all the horrors of retributive vengeance. He hung over and around it the fearful drapery of guilt and despair.

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* This account of Dr. Nott's abundant action and gesticulation in the pulpit is hardly correct in describing his ordinary manner of delivery, though he may have exhibited it on the special occasion referred to. He was, in fact, rather sparing of gesture, at least in later years, though this was at once natural and impressive.

"When our hearts were trembling and our faces clothed in solemn sadness, as if the king of terrors were stalking in among us, he gave us the relief of a contrasted and brighter picture. Moving to the right of the platform he pointed, on the other hand, the tomb of Christ. Here, under his ethereal touch, the picture took on a heavenly aspect. The chains ceased to clank. The brandished arrow of Death was broken. Around this rock-hewn sepulchre

'Smiles and roses were blending,
And beauty immortal awoke from the tomb.'

The great Restorer was set forth, rising in his omnipotent majesty, spreading paleness over the iron-hearted guard, leaving behind him the cerements and all the dark insignia of death, and as a conqueror 'leading captivity captive.'

"The impression made was deep and thrilling, and happy he who had the privilege of a seat, as the writer had, even on the pulpit steps. This sermon was delivered without notes, and from the perfection of its style, and the logical precision of its sentiments, it was evident he had carefully written it, and stereotyped it on his memory. Dr. Nott was one of the few preachers who, though committing to memory their thoughts, retain all the interest and unction of a recent composition."

In May of 1806, he preached, by appointment, and with special reference to the needs of the North American Indians, a sermon on missions. It was before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, convened at Philadelphia, in the early days of the revived interest in the work of missions by the American churches, and when it was necessary to arouse the Christian public to a sense of the responsibility resting upon it, to send the Gospel to the benighted people of the earth. The discourse is marked throughout by the peculiarities with which his sermons on special occasions were wont to strike and impress his hearers. The subject was finely adapted for glowing portraiture, and for calling into play the most striking qualities of style, both in matter and manner, for which his eloquence is distinguished. The divinely beautiful form of Christianity, as contrasted with the aspect of the best of the Pagan systems; the sublimity of its character; its mission and its prospective triumphs; what it had achieved and what remained for it to do; the self-sacrificing spirit of its missionaries; the abominations of the heathen image-worship; the clearness of the prophetical declarations touching the spread and success of the true faith, all uniting in a demand upon the churches for strong and speedy aid to deliver from this degrading moral bondage—these were the topics which a fervid imagination presented in glowing periods, such as could hardly fail to stir and thrill an expectant throng of listeners. A single passage from this sermon, referring more specifically to missionary labors for the reclaiming of the Pagans of our own continent, is subjoined.

"If to shed on the ignorant the light of science, and restore to the oppressed the joys of liberty be magnanimous, by what words shall we express their magnanimity whose zeal pours in the valley of death the light of salvation, and restores to the souls whom Satan has enslaved, the privileges of the sons of God?

"Christians, can you conceive of anything more glorious than extending the blessings of Christianity to those tribes of wretched pagans who dwell upon your borders? You admit the grandeur of the aim, but the difficulties of attainment discourage you. What difficulties? Can the ingenuity of statesmen, or the infidelity of Christians, suggest difficulties insuperable to God? Are there any intricacies in the way, which Omniscience cannot trace? or mountains which Omnipotence cannot sink?

"You say the natives are indolent, vicious, abandoned to drunkenness, impatient of restraint, and utterly averse, not to the purity of the Gospel only, but also to the moral discipline of civilized life. We admit the statement. They are, indeed, subjects every way unpromising. But let it be remembered, that the dry bones over which Ezekiel prophesied, were not less so. And who knows, but these also may hear and live?

"There are always difficulties to be encountered when reformation is the object. And there always must be, while human nature remains perverse. Do you imagine, however, that these difficulties excuse you from exertions? Had Asa reasoned thus, Israel had not been reclaimed. Had the Reformers reasoned thus, Holland, Germany, and Britain—

countries which gave birth to our pious ancestry—had remained to this day in the bondage of Papal authority. Had the apostles reasoned thus, you whom I address as children of the light and partakers of the liberty of the sons of God, would now have been enveloped in impenetrable darkness, and bound in accursed chains. And, in place of this venerable house of God, these holy altars, these ministers of grace, and witnesses of Jesus, with which I am surrounded, mine eyes had beheld a pagan temple, cruel altars, priests stained with blood, and worshippers paying homage unto idols. But they did not reason thus. No, blessed be God, they did not. And yet, their difficulties in diffusing the knowledge of the Saviour far exceeded ours.

"In proof of this assertion, shall I call back the scenes of apostolic sufferings? Shall I retrace those paths, covered with the bodies and stained with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus? Shall I lead you to the confessor's dungeon, to the martyr's stake; and point to fires, and racks, and gibbets, means of cruelty and instruments of torture, till now unknown? In addition to the obstinacy of those whom they sought to Christianize, such were the difficulties with which the early friends of the Redeemer struggled. Both Jews and Gentiles obstructed their course, and counteracted their influence. Emperors persecuted, and princes combined to crush them. But they combined in vain. Their love for Christ was stronger than death, and floods of ungodliness could not quench it. In prison and in exile, on the scaffold and from the cross, salvation was published; and multitudes were converted. Such were the exertions and such the success of the primitive saints. And if our motives were as pure, and our exertions as vigorous, why should not our success be as great?"

But while often called to preach on set occasions and in prominent churches, he frequently responded to the requests of the pastors around him, to render them a service for the Sabbath. He always loved the country. It was a delight to him to preach to a rural congregation. Their simplicity, absence of parade, the quiet and earnest attention paid to the preacher's words, their homely virtues nurtured by church ordinances dearly prized, and bearing fruit in unostentatious deeds of good, made his breast warm toward them. He looked upon these services as a means of special usefulness, and often referred to the satisfaction he found in performing them. Nor was he backward in improving impromptu occasions to preach, which sometimes arose. He used to speak with interest of a service of this kind once rendered under peculiar circumstances. In the autumn of 1806, he was journeying, in his own carriage and on some college business, through Connecticut. Passing over a road not much frequented, he stopped to rest man and horse at an inn. The landlord's attention was soon attracted by seeing him take up and seriously read in a much worn copy of the Bible, the only book that the room contained. The circumstance led to a conversation connected with the volume, and the value of it, from which the landlord learned his guest's profession, whilst the guest became acquainted with the landlord's serious frame of mind and his regrets for the loss of religious opportunities once possessed. It resulted in an earnest request made to the visitor to hold a religious meeting in the house that very evening, no sermon having been heard in the vicinity for months. The landlord undertook to notify the neighborhood. Dr. Nott consented. The notice was quickly spread abroad. The neighbors gathered at the appointed time in numbers, filling the small house and standing densely around doors and windows, in their eagerness to hear the Word. No speaker ever had a more attentive audience. The novel situation and circumstances gave special effect to the preacher's words, and not a few of the hearers were melted into tears. Dr. Nott learned afterward that the impression made was not transient. The seed scattered, literally by the wayside, had taken root, germinated, and borne its fruits in the lives of several then present. He was wont to say, that this seemingly accidental service was among the most blessed in all his ministry.

Such services as these were not suffered to interrupt the closest and most conscientious attention to his college duties. This was the work that claimed and received his chief care. He was always at his post, and the college felt the inspiriting influence of his minute and constant supervision. He did not content himself with giving general directions, and then devolving the practical management of details upon other hands. He made himself perfectly familiar with the condition, working, and needs of every department of the institution. The teachers were selected on his suggestion, and from the knowledge he had obtained of their qualifications. He knew how they met his expectations, and fulfilled their respective trusts. He shaped the policy of the college as well as directed its operations. It was, however, not alone the intellectual training of the classes, the character and mode of their instruction, that received his attention. He was occupied with the erection of new buildings, their locations, the extent and adornment of the surrounding grounds, with the raising of funds, and all the cares that pertained to the college endowment. Everything, in short, relating to the institution, was placed, by the common consent of the trustees, under his individual management. He undertook the trust, not through ostentatious assumption of superior wisdom, but from a sort of necessity ; thus regarded at first, and continuing afterward because he did his work so thoroughly and well, that no one desired to see, or would consent to have, his authority curtailed. He thus became, and continued to remain, the forming mind, the main directing power, of the institution ; impressing his own individuality upon it in a signal degree, and shaping its mission and work by his strong will and far-sighted sagacity.

The college continued to grow rapidly. His wide reputation as a preacher, the spreading knowledge of his character as an educator, helped to swell the classes. Those who had gone forth from under his tuition, with golden opinions of their teacher, attracted others to become candidates for the college, and thus contributed to its success.

The students were known to Dr. Nott, one by one, through personal and familiar intercourse beyond the bounds of the lecture room. Here, however, was his throne. As a teacher he was "to the manner born." When he first joined the college, he taught the Greek, and for a short time, perhaps, in the paucity or absence of the proper professors, he gave instruction in one or two other branches. But he soon settled down to the critical or literary department, in which Kames' "Elements of Criticism" became thenceforward his text-book. The name of "text-book" was so far appropriate, that it was really a book of texts, or of a multitude of themes which the teacher wished to present and amplify—themes involving instruction of the highest import to the young men gathered around him. The lesson was not a bald recitation of a particular part of the author under examination—still less was it a mere question and answer exercise. Some particular theme would be suggested by the chapter relating to physics perhaps, or to mental philosophy, or to morals, or political economy. The student would be asked to give his views upon the matter. One after another would they thus be called up to state opinions. Then the teacher would give a *résumé* of these several views, often variant, and bring order out of the seeming chaos—presenting the question in a lucid aspect, making it striking with apposite illustrations, and impressing it with cogent arguments expressed in well chosen, forcible words. The topic selected would, sometimes, seem quite alien to the matter of the lesson; but one full of interest, and so treated as to fix all its suggestions in the memory. It was the teacher's aim to lead young men to think for themselves, to become self-reliant, to distrust mere authority, where this stood in the place of independent investigation; to develop their own manhood, and then, in good time, to go forth, strong, resolute, and hopeful, to the impending life-struggle. Underlying all his teaching lay the cardinal doctrines of personal honor, integrity, manliness, the fear of God, as being essential to anything that might be truly called "success." Many a person, whose useful and honored life attested the character of his training and principles, has declared that he owed to Dr. Nott's instructions whatever of merit or standing he had won in life. It is certain, that the pupils of this eminent instructor were drawn closely to him, by the magnetism of personal gratitude and love, and that the sentiment above expressed, has been sincerely held by a large proportion of those who received their training under his eye.

CHAPTER X.

PRESIDENCY OF UNION COLLEGE, 1804-1820.—CONTINUED.

Ways and Means—The Financial Difficulties of the college—Need of State aid—Appeal to the Legislature—No funds to bestow on education—Relief offered through the avails of lotteries—The morals of lottery drawing—How regarded seventy years ago—This form of aid accepted—How the legislative grants became available—The fruits reaped by the college—Erection of new college edifices—Completion.

THE question of "ways and means" is one of quite as much interest and importance in literary and educational enterprises as in any other branch of human activity. In the history of American colleges it has ever been strongly prominent. The interests of education, in this country, obtained but slowly the recognition and patronage of the State. In the urgency of other questions growing out of the organization and practical working of a new commonwealth, education was too often thrust into the background, and forced to bide its time. It required patient argument and effort, on the part of the more enlightened minds, to elevate it to the place it is entitled to occupy in the regards of those who manage state affairs. To teach this lesson to our legislators was a work of time, of patient and, sometimes, almost hopeless effort. In the absence of State support, the upbuilding of these institutions was left to the enterprise and zeal of individuals. To get a charter for a college was easy; but to endow it, to furnish means to meet the large outlay inseparable from its establishment, and the constant demands growing out of its vigorous and successful operation—this was the great labor that tasked the ingenuity, skill, and energy of its founders. Some of these devoted toilers have shown such high qualities in the pursuit of their object as well entitle them to be called heroic.

The history of the success of many an institution is, for the most part, a narrative of the toils, sacrifices, faith, constancy and indomitable energy of some leading spirit, who gave himself devotedly to his great work. This is especially true of Union College. Its history, financially considered, is one of success through struggles. And with that success, and those struggles the name of Dr. Nott is inseparably connected.

In a letter which appears on the foregoing pages, Dr. Nott, in speaking of the favorable condition of the college and its prospects, says that if the Legislature will grant to the institution one hundred thousand dollars more, its affairs would look truly promising, and the consequences would be of the most important and beneficent character. This refers to aid furnished from time to time previous to 1805. Though the amount was small, the gifts were timely and *significant*. They revealed the fact, that the Legislature was awakening to the importance of granting aid to institutions of learning, and that the disposition thus manifested would be likely to become more decided. When Dr. Nott became president the finances were, in truth, in a most melancholy condition. During the administration of the first three presidents there had been a constant lack of funds, as well to pay the professors as to meet the regular current expenses of the infant institution. The failure of Dr. Smith's expectations, in this respect, was one of the causes of his early retirement from the presidency. Dr. Edwards died, after a short incumbency, but not before the pressure from this source had been sorely felt, and the prospect had begun to give him serious concern. Dr. Maxcy was not more fortunate than his predecessors, and his short administration was a continuous struggle with financial embarrassment, from which extrication seemed hopeless. His successor came to the institution when its affairs seemed almost desperate. The new college edifice, to take the place of the little cramped building which had subserved the uses of the first small classes, had been begun, but the lack of funds had arrested its progress, and the period of its completion seemed indefinitely remote. Scarcely $30,000 had been obtained in individual subscriptions, and of this a portion was unpaid. Something less had been received from the State, in amounts varying from $1,500 to $10,000; and this was all that had been bestowed during the nine years since the organization of the college. In 1804, the whole expenses were a little short of $4,000 a year, and the income from all sources failed to reach even this moderate sum. In fact, its pecuniary resources may be said to have been exhausted—part having been absorbed by the building, not yet half completed, and the rest having been devoted to carry on the daily business of such an establishment.

Funds therefore were a necessity to the very life of the college. They must come from some quarter, or else the career of the Institution must end ignobly, in failure and disappointment. The first work of the new president, therefore, was to procure aid, not only for growth and strength, but to keep the life from going out. The State was naturally looked to in this emergency; since the day for large individual donations or bequests to literary institutions had not yet dawned. The Legislature had not absolutely refused to respond to former appeals for aid. It had shown, on the contrary, a kindly disposition toward the struggling institution. It would have given more, if this could have been done consistently with justice to other interests. But at this time the State was very far from having large resources or a plethoric treasury. Many pressing demands were made upon its available funds, some of them incidental to a government comparatively young. The public lands were not yet in a condition to yield any great amount of revenue, and the utmost care was necessary to keep the public expenditures within such limits as the safety and prosperity of the commonwealth demanded. An out and out grant, therefore, for the relief and benefit of even an object confessedly so important as a young college struggling for life under its very eye, was not to be expected from the liberality of the Legislature. Unless money could be obtained from some other source than its own treasury, it was vain to look for the State's interposition; and yet, without its help given in some form, the college must soon experience a fatal collapse.

In this state of the case, a mode of relief presented itself, in the form of a lottery to be drawn for the benefit of the college. The moral aspect of lotteries has undergone a change. Such aid to a college would now be thought disreputable. Sixty or seventy years ago the case was very different. Lotteries are unquestionably gambling, if we enlarge the definition of the term so as to take in every expectation of gain or loss that involves the idea of hazard. In this wide sense, however, it would include a great many pursuits to which the word is not now applied. Much of our commerce, esteemed honorable, would be gambling. A great deal of our politics would be the worst kind of gambling. And so the spirit of gambling, encouraged by lotteries as is said, would mean little more in the one class of cases than in the other. But there is no need of any moral disquisition here; the bare statement of the fact, and of the public opinion of the times respecting it, is all that our narrative demands. Whether we are really better than the men of sixty years ago, or whether the change is in the fashion rather than in the substance of our honesty, is especially worthy the attention of the modern pulpit and the modern press. Be this as it may, viewed from our present standpoint the very name, as associated with what is corrupt and corrupting, has become odious. The lottery system, condemned by the moral and religious convictions of the community, has been put under the ban of the civil law. There is none now so poor as to do it reverence, or even to regard it as a thing of negatively injurious tendency, if not positively harmful. But it was not so at the beginning of the century. This mode of raising money held a respectable position in society. Those connected with it were men of the first respectability, who shunned no man's gaze through fear of being thought engaged in a business of questionable morality. The evils connected with it, and which became greater and more pronounced as it grew in strength and influence, were not pointed out, even if they were suspected. The excesses which afterward marked it, were unknown in its earliest and less reprehensible days.

In Europe, as well as in this country, lotteries had long been recognized as perfectly legitimate and unobjectionable means of raising money for charities, for schools, and even for objects purely ecclesiastical. They were not only tolerated, but sustained by the Christian community. They were authorized by law. It was a common thing for a hospital, or seminary, or college, or even a church, to be endowed by funds procured from this source. This shows the place the system held in the regards of the most enlightened and conscientious members of society. If the thing had been regarded as radically immoral, the religious community would hardly have consented to receive pecuniary benefits at its hands, nor would the law-makers have insulted the moral sense of their constituents, by offering, when asked for a gratuity, one obtained by means which the honorable and upright must condemn. It is true, doubtless, that the character of the lottery has not materially changed with the lapse of half a century. What it is now, it was substantially then, but the change is in the higher Christian education, making that appear wrong and odious to-day, which looked quite harmless to the men of sixty years ago. How far evil, as we regard it, may have been done in this case, that good might come out of it, we are not called to discuss; for the persons in question, who received the good, were not conscious of patronizing or practising evil to procure it. It was not evil to their vision; or if some incidental evils were acknowledged as connected with it, this might be alleged also of every good thing under the sun. The lottery, therefore, was no exception. In their judgment, it was not a wrong. It was not demoralizing. It could be and often was a benefactor; and on a large scale. It had means of bringing relief to a struggling hospital, church, or college, when relief could come from no other source, and in this respect it wrought timely and positive good. They therefore received its benefactions thankfully, and asked no questions for conscience' sake.

The college being willing to accept the aid thus proffered (it was not *solicited* in this form), the Legislature passed an act on the 30th of March, 1805, by which four lotteries were authorized to be drawn, to produce eighty thousand dollars. Of this sum, $35,000 were to be applied to the erection of college edifices which the wants of the institution imperatively demanded. As the returns from the drawing of lotteries must necessarily be slow, requiring, as it proved, several years, to complete them, and as the needs of the college were instant and pressing, the trustees were forced to make loans to carry forward the edifice already begun, to procure and pay professors, and provide for other unavoidable expenses which the proper working of the institution demanded. The necessity for prompt relief was so obvious that the Legislature, in 1806, directed the comptroller to borrow $15,000, on the credit of the State, and loan it to Union College; which sum was to be repaid as soon as the avails of the lotteries should be received. The drawing was, in fact, long delayed, not taking place till 1814, or nine years after the act warranting it had passed. The interest on the loans of course accumulated, and at the close of the drawing operation, the college realized only a little over $76,000, instead of the $80,000 which had been granted to it by the act of 1805. This sum was applied according to the direction of the Legislature. The college edifice was completed, additional buildings erected for the accommodation of the increasing numbers who continued to enter the institution, and various improvements made to place its course of study on a broader and more liberal foundation. The aid afforded did much, but fell very far short of the actual needs of the college. The number of students had now become so large, that it was found necessary to furnish additional room. The old college edifice, completed with difficulty, in the infancy of the institution, and adequate for its purposes during its earlier years, had become too circumscribed. Its location, moreover, at first on the skirts of the town toward the east, had, by the growth of the city, become more central. The project, which had long been formed, of erecting buildings worthy of their high purpose, and planting them in a commanding elevation, visible to travellers from every direction, was delayed only till the demand should come, and the means be provided for their erection. That time had now arrived. The number of students was increasing every year. A tract of land, consisting of 300 acres, lying to the east of the city and overlooking it, was purchased, mainly on President Nott's responsibility, as the site of the proposed buildings. These were two in number, four stories high, 200 feet by 40 feet each, with deep colonnades extending in the rear. They were begun in 1812, and completed in 1820, though they began to be occupied in 1814. Thus, before the money granted by the Legislature in 1805 had became available for the payment of the first college edifice, which was not, as has been seen, till 1814, the new building had been begun, the estimated cost of which would not be less than $110,000. To meet this demand, recourse to the Legislature again became necessary, and again did it meet with a favorable response, in the form already authorized. If the Legislature had been unable to respond to the former applications, by a direct appropriation of money from the treasury, it was still less able to do so at the present time. For, in addition to the ordinary burdens imposed upon it, the war with Great Britian, then in progress, had tasked the resources of the State and country to the utmost, and the treasury was in a far more depleted condition than in 1805, when the first large aid was extended. There was no backwardness about granting further supplies to the college, but there was a necessity for resorting to the same method as before, namely by authorizing the drawing of additional lotteries. Accordingly, an act was passed April 13, 1814, by which the following sums were thus granted to the following institutions: To Union College, $200,000; Hamilton College, $40,000; Asbury African Church in New York, $4,000; College of Physicians and Surgeons, $30,000. Simple interest was allowed upon these sums, for not more than six years after the passing of the act.

Under this act, as well as the former one, managers were appointed to take charge of the lotteries, direct the sales, appoint the time of drawing, and in short, arrange and carry out all the details connected with their successful operations. These managers received a specified per centage for their services, but as it was to their interest to have their office continue as long as possible, unnecessary and vexatious delays in the drawing were the consequence. The avails of the lotteries of 1805 were not received till 1814; the present ones had not yielded a dollar of the principal sums granted from 1814 to 1822, and the prospect of obtaining anything for several years yet was anything but encouraging. To obviate this uncertainty, and the long delay which was entailing serious loss, an act was passed by the Legislature on the 5th April, 1822, entitled an "act to limit the continuance of lotteries." Its purpose was to secure the drawing with the least possible delay, to place the management in the hands of the institutions to be benefited, whose trustees were authorized to appoint and remove managers, to make all requisite contracts connected with the drawing, to received the avails and hazard the losses, to be responsible for the payment of the prizes, and in short to take the entire direction and control of the whole matter.

Some of the institutions which were to be benefited by the funds to be raised in this way, were not willing to assume these responsiblities. Hence there was reason to fear that this last act would be productive of no practical good result, through lack of cordial coöperation. In this juncture the president of Union College promptly interposed. He undertook, with the consent of the parties, and the authority of the trustees of Union College, to purchase the entire interest of the other trustees and to assume the whole management himself, according to the terms and conditions specified in the last named act. This proposition was assented to. The trustees of the college, at a meeting held July 24, 1822, fully empowered the president to act on their behalf. The interest of the several institutions mentioned were surrendered for a satisfactory consideration, the moneys necessary for which, amounting to nearly $75,000, being borrowed on the president's individual responsiblity. He thus assumed the management of the lotteries, and entered, in good faith, and with all his wonted energy, on a work, upon the success of which depended the extrication of the college from its present embarrassments, the efficient carrying forward of the new enterprises required for the fuller development of the institution, and the placing of its financial condition upon a sure and abiding basis.

In a future chapter it will be necessary to notice some of the consequences which this bold step, taken by the president in the interests wholly of his beloved college, brought personally upon himself. It was many years afterward, and when he was nearing the close of his long and laborious career, that his management of the trust committed to him was sharply arraigned; and it was charged that he had misappropriated the funds given to the college by the State, and even diverted them to his own individual purposes. This will be more fully noticed in its proper place. The purpose of the present chapter is simply to trace, in outline, the successive steps by which the funds were secured to erect the necessary college buildings, within which so many of the youth of the country were trained for a life of honor and usefulness. The result was such as to justify the confidence which the friends of the institution reposed in the skill, ability, and efficiency of the president to whom its management had been intrusted. To his unwearied efforts was due the raising of the college from a condition but little higher than that of an academy of the first class, into one that made it, in character and influence, not less than in the number of those who enjoyed its advantages, the peer of the older and fully endowed colleges of the land. The plans of the college edifices, as Dr. Nott had marked them out, were developed, one by one, under his eye. The obstacles to their completion, which were often so stubborn and formidable as to dishearten even many who had the interests of the college most at heart, were forced to give way. The financial problem, which for many a year seemed too hard to be solved, was gradually mastered, and the institution rose up strong and unfettered out of all the complications which had long held it down and threatened it with death. The president was the master mind, and the chief actor, in all these achievements. The labor which it imposed upon him, outside of his regular educational province was immense. The passage of the favoring bills though the Legislature was owing, largely, to his personal influence. A note on the legislative records, referring to the passage of the act of 1814, granting the large sum mentioned to Union College and others, is in these words: "No bill before the Legislature excited greater interest and attention than this act. Much credit is due to the unwearied exertions of the able and eloquent president of Union College, in promoting its passage." *

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* For the facts stated in this chapter and the following one, relating to the legislative appropriations, and Dr. Nott's connection with them, and the benefits accruing from them to Union College, I am indebted to the masterly argument of Hon. John C. Spencer before a committee of the Legislature in 1852, in which the whole subject is treated with great fulness and with consummate ability.

CHAPTER XI.

PRESIDENCY OF UNION COLLEGE, 1804-1820—CONTINUED.

The grant of 1814—Indigent students provided for—Influences which secured this end—William Duer, Martin Van Buren, Elisha Williams—Common School Bill passed—Letter of Dr. Nott—West College edifices completed—Increase of students—Students from Southern States—Dr. Nott the directing mind of the college—Charged with too free admissions of students—Letter to Rev. Alonzo Potter—The Scientific Course—Wisdom of its adoption.

THE legislative grant of $200,000, by the act of 1814, may be said to have made the financial future of the college secure. It is true that, in the form granted, the money could only be available after long and vexatious delays. But of its ultimate payment there could exist no reasonable doubt, and on the strength of the assurance, fortified as it was by the moral support given by the State, funds could be raised for present emergencies. Of the sum granted, $100,000 was appropriated for the erection of buildings; $20,000 for library and apparatus; $30,000 for debts already contracted, and $50,000 as a fund, from the income of which aid could be given to indigent students. The latter object was one which the president, mindful of his own early struggles for an education, had greatly at heart. This part of the bill, and its successful passage, were largely owing to the strong advocacy of Hon. William Duer, who afterward rose to the front rank in his profession, becoming eminent on the bench as well as at the bar; and holding afterward, for many years, the presidency of Columbia College. Elisha Williams, of Columbia county, the most eloquent of advocates, was also a firm supporter of it, as was David B. Ogden, whose fame as a jurist ranked him with the foremost of his profession. The Hon. Martin Van Buren—then in the Senate—also gave the bill his vigorous support. Such was the effect of their joint advocacy that, on a final vote, but seven senators were found arrayed against it; while in the lower house the majority was still more overwhelming. The triumphant success of the bill, together with that relating to common schools, was the occasion of great rejoicing on the part of the friends of education throughout the State; and the fruits of this enlightened action have continued to be such as fully to vindicate the sound judgment and liberal policy of the men who originated and carried into effect these important measures.

The details here given have an interest, not so much for their own sake, as reminiscences of the times. It is now an easy thing to advocate the public support of education, especially of common schools. It has become a staple of our political oratory. Then it truly required courage, perseverance, boldness, and a heart-felt interest that disdained the charge of aiming at visionary and impractical legislation. Dr. Nott's long efforts, in this respect, have aided other institutions than Union College.

The bill was passed, but it yielded no present funds. The means, however, must be had, to pay off arrears and debts, some of them of long standing. In this emergency it was necessary, in some way, to anticipate moneys which, by the terms of the legislative grant could only be obtained through the tedium of the lottery-drawing, a process likely to cover several years. Application was therefore made to the Legislature, to empower the comptroller to loan certain sums to the college, on such security as the trustees might be able to give. In a letter to a friend, written the year following the grant, and covering a petition of the trustees to the Legislature for the permission sought, President Nott says:

"We have been making great efforts to give respectability to the institution. Its number had risen from 50 to 150, in a single year, and it is continually increasing. In introducing a new system of edu tion and government, an individual may do much, but the countenance and support of the leading and influential gentlemen in the State are highly necessary. And I do hope the regents will think it important to pay a little extraordinary attention in examining into our real situation and prospects.

"I wished also to have consulted with you respecting our finances, and to have obtained your advice relative to anticipating some farther portion of the moneys granted by lottery. You recollect that a clause was inserted in the Common School bill, authorizing the comptroller to make loans to literary institutions. It was supposed, at the time, that this would meet our case; and it has, in some measure. But it is inconvenient, nay, impossible, for us to give security, to any considerable extent, in "*improved lands.*" Now, would there be any difficulty in obtaining a clause authorizing the comptroller to loan moneys for the completion of the building, and the enlargement of our library, and take, in addition to our bond, a mortgage on the college site, and all the buildings which have been or may be erected on it?"

This arrangement was effected. Money was obtained from loans granted by the State. The new buildings, already much advanced, were carried forward, and were soon in a condition fit for occupancy, although they were not quite completed till 1820. The West College edifice, or the one first built, continued still to be occupied for the purposes of the institution, the two lower classes being accommodated there, while the senior and junior classes had their rooms and the recitations in those last constructed. The number of students had steadily increased each year, according to the president's augury of several years before, until in 1820 the number in all the classes exceeded three hundred, the graduating class alone containing sixty-five. There were names in this class which afterward attained distinguished eminence not confined to a single State. Of these may be mentioned William H. Seward; Laurens P. Hickok, who succeeded Dr. Nott in the presidency, and has long stood at the head of American metaphysicians; William Kent, one of the ablest jurists the State has produced, and many others who became prominent and influential in professional life.

The college, too, had become widely and favorably known, as is apparent from the fact that, in this class there were representatives from four of the New England States, from all the Middle States except Delaware, and from Virginia, the District of Columbia, Tennessee, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia. Indeed, for many years, the South sent more students to Union College than to any other. They were attracted by the fame of its president, as a teacher and administrator. This continued till the controversy growing out of slavery became increasingly sharp and embittered, when the South gradually withdrew its young men from Northern colleges, keeping them nearer home; where indeed, advantages for collegiate training had been greatly on the increase for several years preceding the civil war. The writer passed two or three years in the South, some years ago, and heard no name of a Northern man mentioned with more frequency and respectful appreciation than that of Dr. Nott. The people seemed to know him well, and to have formed the highest opinion of his character and worth. It is certain, that at this period, and long afterward, they contributed freely to the numbers who formed the graduating classes, and that, of those sent forth from the institution were some of the most honored and notable names that adorned the annals of those States.

The high reputation which the college had now obtained, the excellence of its system of education, and the efficiency of its general management, were due mainly to the genius and skill of its president. He shaped its policy, originated plans for its government, suggested and carried into effect changes when needed, and controlled its internal affairs as absolutely as the monarch of a realm whose will is the supreme law. And yet his rule was as gentle as it was firm. No heart-burnings were engendered by his action. No spirit of insubordination or revolt ever manifested itself. The utmost harmony pervaded the counsels of the faculty, and of the board of trustees. The happy effects of his wise and paternal discipline, became more and more manifest by the test of years. He has himself described his modes and processes, and the fruits they bore after the thorough trial of half a century. There may be given an extract to this effect from an address delivered by Dr. Nott in 1854, the year in which the semi-centennial celebration of his presidency was observed. It is a clear and succinct account of the manner of his administration and of the means that made it so efficient. We introduce it here as something which cannot fail to interest the reader.

"When the present incumbent of the Presidency of Union College was elected, the government was administered by the faculty, and on the same principles, in the main, that had in previous times characterized the government of most of the New England colleges. The number of students was small. Suspensions and expulsions had been frequent. Much inconvenience and perplexity had been occasioned to the trustees, as well as to the faculty, by irregularities becoming more and more numerous, in spite of the most constant judicial scrutiny.

"During the first year or two after the election of the present president, no change was attempted. The faculty met and sat as a court: arraigned offenders, examined witnesses, and passed judgment, with all the solemnity and formality of a civil tribunal. This occupied much time and occasioned much perplexity. Besides this, it was found practically to array the students against the faculty, to prevent mutual confidence, and to provoke rather than deter from transgression.

"At length one of the professors of the college came to an issue with a student on the question of his right to illuminate his room on a certain occasion. The student would not retreat, and was therefore expelled. His father appealed to the board of trustees, which the charter of the college gave him a right to do; and after the college had been disturbed by the discussion of the question for six months, the student was restored to his standing.

"The president then determined never again to convene the faculty on a question of discipline, and though fifty years have elapsed he has never done so. After the announcement of this determination, he proposed to the board to fit up rooms in the college, in which, he might reside, with his family, and thus personally take charge of the government of the institution. He was told by the trustees that he would not be able to live in the college a month and, though they reluctantly consented that he should be permitted to try the experiment, insisted that it should be at the least practical expense, as it was not possible that it should succeed. For the last half century, however, it has succeeded. Nor has he in the meantime, nor has a member of his family, ever received either injury or insult from any member of the institution.

"The government of the college in the meantime has been paternal, adapted to the age, temper, and constitution of its members. Whenever an individual has been found offending in conduct, or delinquent in study, he has been sent for and treated as nearly as possible as a parent would treat a child under similiar circumstances. His most intimate companions have been led to take an interest in his behalf. If a member of a society, that society has been appealed to, and every influence at command brought to bear upon him. These efforts persevered in, have almost always proved successful. When this has not been the case, the parent or guardian has been requested to withdraw his son or ward.

"In this way the relation of the delinquent to the institution is terminated privately, and with the least possible injury on either side, whilst he is left at liberty to complete his education elsewhere, which is sometimes happily done with entire success, and always with the entire approbation, often by the advice, and with the assistance, of the college which he leaves.

"Little reliance has been placed on appeals to the principle of fear. Emulation has been appealed to, and to an extent that has sometimes proved injurious. But latterly moral and religious instruction, the sense of honor, and the love of knowledge, have been principally relied on; whilst the chief concern has been to teach the young men to bring themselves under the rule of inward principle rather than that of outward fear or restraint.

"The trustees, by accepting the conditions of the trust deed, have now made this system of government a permanent and perpetual feature in Union College. And this they were the more ready to do, as since its adoption, there has been neither a general rebellion, nor an expulsion, nor any resistance in any way to the government of the institution. Under this regimen, the most unpromising young men have been reformed; and many, who might have been ruined by an opposite method, are now occupying prominent places in the church, or at the bar, or in some other useful and honorable occupation.

"The course of scholastic instruction, as well as the system of government, have undergone such changes as the wants of this young free country seemed to require. And though the usual curriculum of studies, including the Greek, the Latin, and Hebrew languages, has been carefully preserved, a separate scientific course has been instituted, in which the modern languages have been substituted in place of the ancient. Besides these two regular courses of study, provision has been made for giving instruction in such select departments as may be desired.

"A higher course for resident graduates is about to be established. When this is done, the requisite provision, it is thought, will have been made for meeting, in some adequate degree, the wants of the country and the age in which we live."

From this statement it appears that the system, both of government and instruction, in the college, had marked and peculiar features; that it was adopted by the president after earnest and careful deliberation; that it was adhered to firmly with such improvements as might adapt it to the wants and spirit of the age; and that long experience of its advantages vindicated its excellence and proved it successful in attaining the objects it purposed to reach. In this method the student's self-respect is constantly appealed to. He is taught to rely upon himself, to cultivate the qualities that belong to a proper manhood, and to enter on active life with a feeling of confidence in himself, yet tempered by a well-cultivated self-restraint. This was the principle which underlaid Dr. Nott's system of education. It was this course which gave him the strong hold he had, and was sure to retain, on the hearts of his many students. It was this, in short, that gave him such rare success as an educator. He was opposed to close constraint, to the exercise of stern authority, to the mere rigidity of conventional rules. There was a higher principle than terror, to secure all these ends, and so secure them that the means of reaching them should get to be loved. He regarded every one of the young men before him in his classes as having in him somewhere the elements of a true manhood. These, if only brought out, fostered, and perhaps stimulated, would result in a creditable and useful life. With this view he loved to take by the hand the timid, shrinking youth who needed encouragement, and pointing him to the good he might attain, bid him go bravely on his way. The careless and the idle could in this way be won to greater diligence. The stubborn and the vicious even, could be induced so far to respect themselves as to refrain from what must injure others; the dull might be led to perform their duties cheerfully and well. Many students, therefore, came under his care, for whom no welcome room was elsewhere found. Not a few who seemed morally unpromising if not irreclaimable, went forth from his instruction buoyant and brave in the consciousness of powers which they hardly suspected themselves to possess, and with virtuous resolves which it was hardly thought possible to inspire.

That this system of instruction should be assailed, was hardly to be avoided. The college, whose renown spread so fast, and which sent forth increasing numbers of graduates every year, must needs be, it was flippantly said, "in an unhealthy state; its standard of education must be low, its requirements for entrance lax and fluctuating." It was charged that applicants denied admission into other colleges, were sure to be received into this. All persons presenting themselves—so the charitable allegation ran—were sure to be taken in, without much regard either to character or qualification. Students expelled from other colleges had only to apply, to be at once welcomed and established among the promising candidates for the bachelor's degree. It was a "Botany Bay," as those of some other colleges were wont facetiously to call it, where students suffering under penal disabilities elsewhere found easy refuge. Persons with little scholarship and less application might get through the prescribed course without difficulty, and receive a regular degree, which, in some cases, it was most falsely declared, was given in advance to certain parties who wished to leave the institution long before the close of the collegiate term.

It were folly to answer charges so absurd as most of these. Those who knew the college knew that, in respect to the extent, variety, and thoroughness of the course of study prescribed and exacted, its standard would compare well with that found in most of the other institutions of the country, some of which made louder pretensions, with far less of public fruit to show in support of them. There were some incidental drawbacks to the system which was in operation in Union College, and these were magnified by rivals or ill-wishers into positive and radical defects. The rapid growth of the college was one of the causes of unfavorable criticism. It excited suspicion in those who could not see in it, or were unwilling to acknowledge, the energy of its head. The matter need not, however, be dwelt upon in the way of vindication. Dr. Nott himself may fitly be heard on the question, though some may look upon his views as having been those of an interested party. The matter of the objections and charges like those just mentioned was brought to his attention by Rev. Alonzo Potter, his son-in-law, then rector of St. Paul's Church in Boston, as being made by several parties in that vicinity. He writes as one in duty bound to divulge what he had heard, and what, if true, he condemned. Dr. Nott answers in the following letter:

"UNION COLLEGE, September 10, 1828.

"MY DEAR SIR: Yours of the 12th has come to hand. I greatly regretted that my friend Dr. Wayland had left home before I reached Providence, and but for learning that he was obliged to go to Salem, and would have gone from Boston before I could reach it, I should have returned there.

"To your long detail of collegiate imputations I can only say (as you will naturally expect I should say something) that I am not aware that there is any ground for those you have recited. I do not know of, nor do I believe that a single case of the kind you mention has occurred here, and I am quite sure no such case has been known to have occurred. That we may not have been imposed upon I will not venture to say, because I know that other colleges have been. There have been cases within my own personal knowledge, of young men, members of our institution, being smuggled into other institutions, contrary to their laws, and without, as I presume, their knowledge. But as it was no offence to me, I never said anything on the subject, and the affair passed off *sub silentio.* It has been our lot for many years, I cannot tell why, to be represented, particularly in the Eastern States, as being in a very immoral and irregular state. And now it seems that other complaints are made. Though entirely disapproving that monopoly which the existing combination among the colleges is intended to secure, I have always acted in the spirit of the common law on the subject. I have even practised the most scrupulous delicacy—and, within a short time, have resisted applications for admittance from Hamilton, from Columbia, from Washington, from Williamstown, and from Brown University. Indeed, were I a believer in the wisdom of the restriction (which I am not), I could not have paid greater deference to the law that enjoins it; and, if there be any *one case* to the contrary, notwithstanding all you have stated, I should really be glad to have it pointed out.

"The reproach, so far as it may be accounted one, we must be contented to bear, and I hope we shall not give any occasion for greater complaints. The common sayings to our disadvantage, though undesirable, do not materially injure us. They do not at least appear to prevent a growing confidence in our institution. I cannot but regret that our friend Wayland, whom I so much regard, and in whose prosperity I feel so great an interest, should be misguided; and misguided I believe he is, if any part of what you have detailed is believed by him. But as it is quite possible that there may be some fire where there is so much smoke, I should really like to know who those favored individuals are, or, at least, to know some of them who have received the honors of this college in advance; for, if there be any one, I am certainly ignorant of his residence, and his name, the college from which he came, or the year in which he graduated.

"In great haste, and very affectionately,

"E. NOTT.

"REV. ALONZO POTTER.

"P.S.—As the Dartmouth youth must have been a youth of especial promise, I think his name might be pointed out.—E. N."

Another letter on the same subject, written to the Rev. Mr. Potter about two years afterward, and in reply also to certain allegations made in that quarter against Union College, for offences of like character with the foregoing, runs in these word:

"REV. A. POTTER.

"MY DEAR SIR: As it is our time of examination, I have only a moment to write. How persons in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, know so much more of our affairs than we do of theirs, I cannot tell. We write no newspaper puffs—we send abroad no agents—we do not even print a pamphlet catalogue. We remain quiet. We speak evil of no other college, and try to mind our own affairs. The *why* is as unaccountable as the *how*. I cannot imagine the reason why there should be occasion, year after year, to say anything about us, true or false. If we had even, in any case, during the troubles in other colleges, counteracted their plans, or given shelter to what they call their rebels, there might be a *reason*, if not a justification for this repeated complaint. But it is a truth that, though always applied to, we have always refused young men *revolting* from government elsewhere. And in the recent case of the Yale revolters, though they have been readily received in several institutions around, and though numbers have applied to us for admission, we have, as usual, declined receiving them, and thus given our influence to Yale in time of difficulty—an influence that may have been of little use to them, but still, that ought, at least, to have secured us against complaint.

"As to our admissions we must, of course, be the judges, of what our state of society requires, and what it will bear. If the colleges in New England require more or less, I have no complaint to make. I have only one thing to say, that we are yearly receiving students from them, students of unimpeached standing, who do not take rank here as I should expect, if their classes are so much in advance of ours. We are, however, I admit, doing not so well as I could wish; not so well as we ought to do. I hope our friends in the East are doing better. But whether better or worse, one thing is certain, that, in more respects than one they speak ill of us without cause, and the only consoling circumstance about it is that it is without cause.

"Yours sincerely,

"E. NOTT."

In the statement heretofore published, in which Dr. Nott explains his mode of instruction, he referred to some changes which had been introduced since his connection with the college, in order to adapt his system to the wants of a young, growing country. He speaks, in particular, of the "scientific course," the design of which was to enable young men who desired to pursue studies such as the modern languages, or others that might fit them for practical life, to do so, without attending to the classics, or following the full course of collegiate study. This plan was novel when he adopted it, and it was found to work well, large numbers of young men entering the college to avail themselves of the advantages thus held out to them. They might remain in college for what period they chose, receiving when they left, a certificate of the branches they had studied, and the time they had devoted to the pursuit, but not receiving the regular diploma which they alone were entitled to who had fairly and fully completed the classical course. This change, which resulted in bringing into the college numbers whose education, not being thorough in the regular branches, might be looked upon as superficial and defective, had its influence, no doubt, in causing the disparaging remarks which many were wont to indulge in at the expense of Union College. The system, however, had peculiar excellences of its own. Its introduction, and its being firmly clung to in spite of depreciation, were productive of large benefits to many who were able to enjoy its privileges; thus evincing the enlightened judgment of President Nott, who is entitled to the honor of having originated the plan. It came to be adopted gradually by other colleges, bearing good fruits among them, as it had done years before in the college where its operation began. A paper written on this subject by a gentleman of education and discernment, some years after, when Brown University had just introduced the same course and was reaping the benefits of it, points out the excellence of the system, and does justice to the foresight of its originator.

A tree must be judged from its fruits. The scientific course of study, excluding the ancient classics and embracing those branches mainly which are adapted to prepare young men for practical life, has been tested long enough in Union College to ascertain its real merits. The longer it has been tried, the worthier it has proved itself of public confidence and support. It has given to large numbers of young men, able and anxious to avail themselves of its facilities, the precise training needed for the highest efficiency and usefulness in the multifarious employments of practical life. Not a few of these have, as educated men, taken creditable rank among inventors, engineers, teachers, editors, men of business enterprise, and leaders of opinion in practical matters of moment in every-day life. The deliberate judgment of President Nott, sustained by his long experience of the plan, approved it unreservedly, and led him solemnly to perpetuate it, as a part of the fixed system of the college, through the provisions of the "trust deed," whose large benefits are conveyed to the college only as the scientific course is maintained. This part of its educational system is sure to be preserved, and will not fail to yield good fruits to society, and in greater abundance in the future than it has done in the past. We give the paper referred to.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION.

"Public attention has of late been attracted to an improvement in collegiate education adopted in Brown University, under the superintendence of Dr. Wayland, the learned and eminent president of that institution. The plan of education pursued in our colleges has long been considered ill adapted to the wants of American youth. It is too much modelled after the systems of the European universities, where the class of students, as well as the objects of a liberal education are essentially different from those of this country. In all of our colleges the study of the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew languages has occupied a large portion of the time of the undergraduates; and the prescribed course of study has been indispensable to the attainment of collegiate honors, or indeed to a membership in the institution. We do not deny the utility of these studies, and would be the last to desire their exclusion from our higher seminaries of learning. They are essential to the attainment of a complete scholarship. Yet while they are retained and hold their place in the regular collegiate course, those who have not the time or inclination for their study, and yet are desirous of obtaining a more complete education than is afforded by the inferior seminaries, should not be debarred from the advantage which the college presents. To accommodate such, the old classical course should be dispensed with, and its place supplied by other studies adapted to the practical man. Such, in brief, is the idea which has been adopted in the recent arrangements at Brown University. The old college curriculum has been retained, while a parallel course has been added, in which scientific, agricultural, mathematical, moral, and practical studies take the place of the ancient classics. The plan is greatly applauded, and bids fair to become popular, and to bring crowds of patrons to the institution. But the merit of originating the idea, and of its practical adoption, does not rightfully belong to President Wayland. It should be credited to that veteran collegian, President Nott of Union College. The plan has been in operation in that popular institution for several years, and is the prominent cause of the flood of patronage which it has enjoyed. It has long been deemed the best school for the *practical* man, and its reputation will be sustained so long as its instruction is shaped and adapted to meet the wants of the day and the country. While other colleges send out their alumni, claiming for them a high scholarship, cultivated tastes, and a critical and accurate knowledge of the lore of past ages, Union, without neglecting these great aims, sends forth her sons armed for the conflicts of practical life. They are found in the van of the workers of the age, whether in professional pursuits, in politics, in the prosecution of commerce and of trade, or amid the forming elements of new States in remote parts of the country. They are the men for the times, and their production is attributable to the discipline they have there received.

"It is among the most promising signs of the times, that the educational plan of Dr. Nott is being adopted in other colleges, and gaining favor with the leading minds of the country. While we rejoice that it is so, we desire to see the honor of the idea bestowed upon the venerable man to whom it rightfully belongs."

CHAPTER XII.*

DR. NOTT AS AN EDUCATOR.

Specially devoted to Dr. Nott's character as an educator—His mode of government—Its paternal character—Address of Bishop Potter, as containing very pertinent and touching allusions to the subject—Letter of Professor Tayler Lewis, giving at length the results of his experience and his knowledge of Dr. Nott's educational and disciplinary views.

DR. NOTT'S character as an educator, and his methods of government, were very peculiar. What was most successful with him, might not have been equally so in other hands. Its laudation, therefore, subjectively truthful as it is, must be considered in connection with its personal aspect, and those personal feelings which consecrated, we may say, a method that might have been positively injurious if practised as a mere scheme of administrative management. This warm personal feeling which characterized and hallowed it, appears very impressively in the subjoined picture of Bishop Horatio Potter, as presented in a late address before the Regents of the University, at the Commencement, July 23, 1875. It contains other personal allusions, especially in the opening paragraphs of the extract, but our readers, we are sure, and especially graduates of Union College, will be warmly interested in its touching remimiscences.

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* The picture of Dr. Nott, and of his methods of college government, as given in the latter part of Chapter XI., is the warm tribute of the leading author. It corresponds well with the general opinion. The commendation expressed is similar to that which meets us in the panegyrics of warm-hearted and admiring pupils of highest standing, such as Judge W. W. Campbell, Hon. John C. Spencer, William H. Seward, and others, who have eulogized him on public occasions. The picture has its true features; there is nothing about it distorted or enlarged. Still it does not give the whole case, and may, therefore, provoke criticism as well as give rise to some misapprehensions. To meet such criticism, and to correct such misapprehensions, is the design of the present chapter. Taken in connection with the preceding, the representation may be regarded as full, and, at the same time, entitled to confidence on the score of conscientious accuracy.—T. L.

"GENTLEMEN OF UNION UNIVERSITY: Fifty years ago there stood forth upon the stage of Union College, Schenectady, a youthful student just entering upon his senior year, and privileged to celebrate his elevation to the crowning dignity of the undergraduate in a junior oration.

"A year later he reappeared upon the same stage, appointed, along with a goodly company of associates, to do his little best in a senior oration. And then, having received the usual testimonials, and having spoken many a parting word, the time came to take leave of his Fair Mother, and of those pleasant scenes so tenderly associated with four years of eager study and reading, and bright social enjoyment—years which he now looks back upon as among the happiest and most profitable of his life.

"Fifty years quickly passed, and the youthful student returns—*quam mutatus*—returns an old man, bearing about him sad traces, many without, far more within, of half a century of labor and care. He returns to look upon the graves of children, and of their tender, devoted mother. Changed himself, changed in all things, save in his affections, in his attachment to friends, in his love of books and good learning, in his tender, reverent regard for the dear old college—changed himself, he beholds change everywhere around him, and here in this assembly he gazes, now upon the living before him, some known, many unknown, and now, with a kind of *second sight*, upon forms, revered, beloved, disclosed only to the vision of age.

"As in Westminister Abbey, in time of Divine service, the stranger, if he chance to lift his eye to glance around him, beholds an impressive scene—a kind of realization of the communion of the living and departed: the living worshippers on their knees around him while on many a monument within his view is seen a recumbent form with hands uplifted and clasped as if in prayer, so here I seem to dimly see well-known forms, distinguishable by characteristic bearing and action, moving across the stage, or gravely seated here in the place of authority, as if still full of interest in these scenes, still caring for the Fair Mother, her servants and her children!

"Foremost among them all, 'the old man eloquent'—the real founder of this noble seat of learning, and for more than half a century its consummate ruler! The guide, philosopher, and friend of a long succession of many hundreds of ardent enthusiastic young men, since dispersed over all the Union, devoted admirers of his wisdom, eloquence, and goodness!

"How distinctly I see him, as he appeared on commencement day, 'the observed of all observers,' passing uncovered, in flowing robe, between two lines of students and distinguished strangers up the walk toward the church, and having on either hand a high State official, or an honored guest. The whole brilliant ceremonial here within, with what grace and dignity he presided over it! Who, that was a student here fifty years ago, can have forgotten the ancient, mysterious three-cornered hat, which it was such a privilege and honor merely to look upon, because only once a year it came forth from its academic *sanctum*, on occasion of the great annual literary festival.

"Or, to turn your thoughts toward yonder classic eminence, who that had the happiness of being a student there half a century ago, can have forgotten the glow of admiration and sympathy with which we used to listen to those discourses, always impressive, sometimes striking, on a Sunday afternoon toward evening, in the rude college chapel, where many that came to enjoy an intellectual treat, or to criticise, went away to think deeply; perchance to pray! Or again, reëntering, on a week-day afternoon, one part of that rude college chapel, devoted then to recitations and lectures, where we used to listen to the wondrous *talks* of that master thinker—talks on matters of taste, literature, philosophy, morals, religion, practical wisdom—all things, great and small, that could enlarge the mind, refine the feelings, improve the heart—a boundless store, worthy to be incorporated into a manual of life. With what refreshed, elevated spirits we came forth, day after day, from that pure intellectual feast!

"And then, in *government*, in *discipline*, what a master! How he swayed the hearts of young men! In his whole bearing what a matchless union of dignified gentleness, tenderness, patience, firmness! How well he knew the power of that chiefest attribute of the Almighty Father: Love, Mercy! And in the might of that sublimest of gifts what miracles he wrought; sometimes suddenly, in perverse, wayward hearts! O! often in his own study; often in the private room of the unhappy student, was there a scene over which angels rejoice, and over which fathers and mothers, had they known the whole truth, would have wept in silent wonder and thankfulness: A wilful youth, in peril of ruin, smarting under a sense of his own neglect, wrong-doing, humiliation; angry with himself, with every thing and everybody about him; still bent upon rebellious, insulting courses toward the chief authority, looking for nothing from that authority but harsh words, severe measures, he suddenly finds himself in a presence of inexpressible dignity, but full of kindness, sweetness, gentleness, and listening to words of sympathy and encouragement. When least expecting it, he is touched with the finger of love! O! for the overcharged bosom, it is too much! Pride breaks down! Anger vanishes. Nobler feelings rise up and take their place; and that youth, when once more he finds himself alone, shows by his kindling eye, his loftier mien, that he is possessed by a new spirit, is arming himself for worthier deeds henceforth! And, let it be added, in many cases, the subseqent life, *in* college and *after* college, fulfilled the promise of that happy hour!

" Blessed ministry, where there is the heart and the wisdom to exercise it! *That old heathenish system of public ignominious expulsions;* how at the very mention of it his whole nature revolted! He would have nothing to do with it. By wise precautions he labored to exclude evil; by timely intervention sought to repress it, or to transmute it into good. His supreme aim was to save and to bless. But, when all efforts with the wayward failed—a thing rarely known—he proceeded by delicate, private methods, intimating to parents or friends that the unhealthy member must be quietly withdrawn.

"All honor to his memory! The college is his sufficient monument. May it flourish and grow! And may the able, energetic inheritor of his dignity and of his responsibilities, who, aided by munificent friends, has given such a fresh vigorous impulse to the life of the institution, prove in all things worthy of the grand father, who made the place which he now fills to be truly a place of honor! May he be not altogether unworthy of the *father*, the memory of whose labors and of whose eloquent lessons is yet fresh in the beloved college, as it is yet fresh in the field of his latest labors and final resting place!"

The subject is an important one, and as Dr. Nott's character (as is often the case with men of mark and genius distinguished by an active life), had various sides to it, it may be well to give the impression it produced on minds viewing it from varied stand-points. The view taken in the preceding chapter may be pronounced correct. The same may be said, and still more emphatically, of the eloquent sketch presented by Bishop Potter. Their merit, and their claim to confidence, are attested by the warm heartiness that characterize them, and all similar testimonies which distinguished graduates of the institution have ever borne to the memory of this much-loved man. The picture, moreover, is most true, objectively. It sets the man before us; and this is the great object of all biography. It will be assented to by the great majority of his pupils, so many of whom have held, and are now holding positions of influence in our land. It is in accordance, too, with that popular sentiment now predominant, in favor of the milder discipline, both in the college and in the common school—a sentiment which Dr. Nott, more than any other educational authority in our country, has been the means of introducing. There is, however, another aspect to the matter, and, in presenting it, it was thought best to preserve the original form which was given to the statement, before the writer became more closely associated with the authorship of this book. This form was that of a letter written by one who was an early graduate of the college and intimately familiar with it, a favorite pupil of Dr. Nott, and, for a number of years, during the latter part of the president's life, associated with him as a professor in the institution. It is a criticism—not so much of dissent as of explanation—made by him on views like those presented in Chapter XI., and as they are generally, and very cordially, held by graduates of Union College.

"SCHENECTADY, December 20, 1873.

"MY DEAR SIR: What you say in respect to Dr. Nott's government is true in fact. Such was the man, and such the course pursued by him during his long adminstration, extending to the unexampled term of sixty-one years. But the question still remains, Was it the right course? I mean, right in itself—right in respect to general practice, without the safeguards arising from Dr. Nott's warm heart, as well as his peculiar temperament and character? With him it was a most undoubted success. Would it have been so in the hands of others? It used to be said that Dr. Nott's mode of ruling a college would make it difficult for any one that might follow him. There was truth in this, and it was felt by his immediate successor, Dr. Laurens P. Hickok. This gentleman resembled him in mildness and amiability, though without what might be called his personal magnetism, while presenting a marked contrast in other aspects of character. Dr. Hickok might fairly be called a man of action as well as of contemplation ; he was a lover of right, or righteousness in its purest sense, a lover of law as well as of the individuals who were under its jurisdiction, but he was best known as a profound philosophical thinker. His great kindness of disposition would have led him cheerfully to follow the disciplinary method that had been so long and so clearly marked out by his predecessor, even had he not been required to conform to it by an express resolution of the trustees, passed in conformity with a provision of the trust-deed you have mentioned, and which secured to the college its largest fund. The personal qualities referred to in Dr. H., his long and familiar acquaintance, both as student and as associate, with Dr. Nott's way, his cordial assent to it in its main features, would doubtless have secured a successful administration, had he not soon resigned his office, from a strong personal desire to devote himself, more completely, to his cherished philosophical studies. With one an entire stranger to the college, and its previous management, the successorship to such a leader might have been hazardous. That danger, however, there is good reason to believe, has been avoided in the happy choice of the present incumbent, a son of the late Bishop Alonzo Potter, and a grandson of Dr. Nott. Hereditary traits and hereditary instruction combine to make the way natural and easy to him, without any of that forced imitation which might only bring out the evil aspects, instead of securing the better features of the system.

"Another cause which secured its favorable working in the hands of Dr. Nott was the coöperation, for so many years, of Bishop Alonzo Potter, his son-in-law and most intimate friend. The two men were very unlike, and yet the harmony between them, as is often the case with dissimilar characters, was perfect. A most thorough confidence in the truthfulness and moral principle of the one was equally balanced by a like confidence in the wisdom, the sagacity, and, more than all, the paternal affection of the other. It was this last trait that, more than anything else, rendered successful, in the hands of Dr. Nott, a method of college government that, with others, might have been a dangerous failure. Viewed by itself, and as it has been sometimes described without qualification, it is certainly open to many objections. Dr. Nott has been represented as appealing solely, or in the main, to the feeling of self-respect. There is, however, a great difference between using this as a governing, or as an aiding principle; between employing it in a hollow, artificial way, or as a method of directing the mind to the true moral worth—as something to be gained or lost. The unqualified doctrine of 'self-respect,' as often presented by mere humanitarian reformers, has suspicious features. Have we a right thus unqualifiedly to tell a young man to respect himself when he has been doing wrong? Is that the first and most fitting frame of mind required of him? Are not humility, self-distrust, repentance—penance, even, in some salutary sense—duties that take precedence? The two instructions may, indeed, be combined. The sense of sin and vileness may be rendered more keen by a consideration of the moral dignity, or "spirit worthiness"—to use Dr. Hickok's favorite phrase—which they have contravened, or put in jeopardy. It may thus be well to point young men to a potential spiritual value in themselves as marred and degraded by the offence—a true self-respect which they must strive to *recover*; but this must be done by wary speech, and, above all, there must be with it a loving heart, or there is danger of covering up that true view of allegiance to God and the right which is so apt to be lost sight of in such a process of disciplinary instruction. The young man has indeed offended *against himself*; but the

Scripture presents a higher idea, and uses a higher language. 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I *sinned;'* it is "in Thy sight that I have done evil." This is the feeling primarily to be awakened. And then it may be added: I have wronged my own soul; I have lost the approval of conscience, or, in other words, my true self-respect. Thoughts like these, coming in their proper places, are not only right, but may intensify the higher and purer feeling. It is easy to see, however, that in unskilful hands, or as prompted by a mere finessing spirit, or by nothing higher than a shrewd ethical sagacity, all such talk of self-respect may be but the worst of spiritual poisons. There is reason to believe that the most incurable mischief may be wrought by men who would imitate Dr. Nott without the possession of that personal quality which, with him, was the great security for the good, and the effectual antidote for the evil connected with such a mode of moral discipline. The mere managing, or finessing process on which some pride themselves, as containing the great secret of ease and success in educational government, has, for one of its greatest evils, its contagious nature. With no higher principle of grace or morals to counteract it, it passes readily from the teacher to the taught, perpetuating itself, and, it may be, in a geometrical progression. It furnishes the argument mainly used by those who are opposed to corporal punishment, or any severe discipline in our common schools. 'See,' say they, 'how easily we get along without that *relic of barbarism.* We praise a boy, we make him think well of himself, and that makes him behave himself; we tell him that he may one day become President of the United States.' It is wonderful, say they, how this operates; how easy, too, it makes things. True; but at what an expense, it may be, of moral principle in after life! I am not unqualifiedly condemning this appeal to self-respect. As used by Dr. Nott, it was a different thing from those imitations, or rather caricatures of it. I am enabled to say this from intimate acquaintance with the man. We sometimes conversed upon the subject after I became a member of the faculty, more than twenty years ago. I held the more conservative ideas, as they seemed to me, of paramount authority, inflexible penalty, unyielding law. *Ideas,* I may call them, since I had no experience like his own, and no practical participation in the government of the college, which was wholly autocratic. He would say to me in substance: As a theory, your doctrine is right. It contains principles that should never be lost sight of where they are truly applicable. It is thus applicable to the army, to the city, to the State. But the college is a family, and its government should be parental. These young students are my children. I am to them in place of a father. I feel as such toward them, and not simply as their governor, or their official head. Thus regarded, the paternal rule was, with him, no sham. Wise, indeed, was he in its adminstration, but it was no finessing, such as I have described it as practised in other cases. It may have sometimes presented that appearance to outside observers, and thus brought upon him that charge of 'management,' to which you refer. Such a feeling, too, did sometimes exist in the college, and so far, it may be conceded, there was connected with this paternal discipline an almost unavoidable evil. The good boys, of whom I was one—having no college misdemeanors, slight or serious, to boast of—could hardly help feeling, sometimes, that the Doctor was partial to 'the wilder fellows'; that he rather liked them, in fact, and took more pains with them than with the other and more exemplary members of the college. Out of this grew that idea of management which some carried with them into the world, though any unfavorable feeling that might have thence arisen was cured in all of us who had familiar intercourse with him in after life. It was, after all, as I look back to it, but the self-righteousness of the more orderly sheep, who felt like charging the shepherd with partiality because he did not notice them in their secure bookish pastures, but went so much after the straggling ones in the wilderness. Or it was like the murmuring of the well-behaved elder brother, who said: "I serve thee faithfully, I have never broken thy commandment," when he was breaking the very heart of the law in his envy of the pains taken to welcome back the returning prodigal?

"This was the real secret of success in Dr. Nott's 'management.' It was his deep sincerity. He may have prided himself upon his skill, especially when he saw it productive of such desirable results. It was a natural trait in his character, as you have intimated, to be fond of doing things cleverly and effectually. It is but justice, however, to say, that in his dealings with students this desire was wholly subordinate to a purer aim. Love was predominant; hence a resort to anything rather than summary justice, or speedy excommunication. Artifice may be innocent. Even if verging toward the very borders of the truthful, better to exceed a little 'in the wisdom of the serpent,' than to fail in 'the tenderness of the dove.' I call to mind an expression of his that was very frequent: 'I cannot bear to give up that boy,' he would say; and the feeling with which it was said showed the deep parental heart, sanctifying, as it were, every mode of effort for the recovery of the youthful wanderer. It was the knowledge of this that made Dr. Nott's students love him so in after life. It was this, especially, which made him almost an object of worship to those who were conscious that he had saved them from moral shipwreck, or hopeless spiritual ruin.

"When every known means within his power had failed, and he felt it due to parents to advise the withdrawal of their son from college, even then there followed him this 'love that never faileth.' As he says himself in the semi-centennial discourse to which you refer, instead of insisting upon their exclusion from other colleges, he not only permitted but used means for facilitating, their admission, not by concealment, but by a frank statement of the case to the authorities of the other institution. He might do better elsewhere; a change may benefit him by the disruption of evil associations; if we have failed, others may be more successful in the use of means for his redemption: this was the style of reasoning constantly employed. *Give him another chance.* Such was the noble language habitual to him on these occasions. He felt no jealousy when other colleges received one who had failed at Union; and he would never allow himself to be censured for a reverse proceeding of a similar kind. Let me say a word here on a matter that concerns the reputation of the institution with which I am connected. Obloquy has been cast upon Union for its alleged course in receiving students dismissed from other colleges, contrary to what had grown to be a kind of common law. Expulsion, it was said, created this ban, though mere dismission, or some forms of it, might fall short of such a disqualification. The difference was not clearly fixed, but Dr. Nott always avoided the more formal exclusion, on account of its being supposed to cause this hopeless bar. Students, however, who had been sent away from other colleges, were sometimes received into the classes of Union. Here he stood firm. No cry of 'Botany Bay'—to use some of the classical language which the charge gave rise to on the part of others—ever moved him an inch from his fixed and well-reasoned determination. The classes at Union, during his administration, were always large. Such foreign additions were too inconsiderable to warrant the imputation of any other motive in receiving them than one of principle, whether well or ill grounded. This principle was the same with that adhered to in the reverse circumstances: No young man should be deprived of the opportunity of *trying again.* As long as the institution against which he had offended was willing to give him such a chance, or to receive him back on any terms, there was to be no interfering. When she was done with him, or declared herself hopeless of effecting his reformation, or doing him any good, her claim, as well as her power was exhausted, and she had no right to control the young man in any way, or to dictate to others what they might, or might not, do in relation to him. As well might certain members of the medical profession combine to cast odium on any one who received a patient whom they had given up. *Let him try again:* The very change bringing him into new associations, with a new reputation to win, might be his salvation. Such was Dr. Nott's position ; such was his reasoning, and he would never yield it. No clamor, no literary vindictiveness, strangely intolerant as it sometimes is, no fear of unpopularity, ever moved this 'time-serving man,' as some called him, from the ground on which he had so unalterably fixed himself. There were times when the faculty were disposed to remonstrate with him. It was not pleasant to be called Botany Bay by any who regarded themselves as the classical purists of the land. He was advised to reject some students to whom the college from which they came had refused to give the regular credentials of dismission. Dr. Nott's decision was to treat the case as an original one, to listen to the statement of the applicant, to treat with all due consideration what might be alleged against him, to ask for him a re-hearing and a restoration, and, if that were deemed inadmissible, under the circumstances, then, according to his own best judgment, to receive him to a new probation. In all such cases, when his mind was once made up, he would play the autocrat most magnificently. The young man is not to be given up ; *let him try again.* This was all he would say to objections urged against such a proceeding. The expelling college may have been right in the course it has taken, but it has no right to place any one under a ban which shall exclude him from all hopes of education.

"It may be fairly admitted that there is another view of this matter, and that it is entitled to attention. The general interests of education, it might be said, demanded such common law, or common understanding, that a student sent away from one American college should find no admission in another. It was good to have something that might be deemed effectual as a last restraint. Dr. Nott was willing to admit that, to a certain extent, there was justice in such reasoning. As he affirms, in a letter to Bishop Potter, then residing at Boston (and in reply to a statement of such charges made against him in New England), he generally adhered to the rule, though he would not regard it as absolute and inflexible. He would treat other colleges with all the courtesy that was their due; he would frankly consult them in any case that might arise; he would give due weight to any remonstrance. In one thing he never failed, and that was to support their authority in every instance of open rebellion. When he had acted faithfully in all these respects, then would he follow his own best judgment. Something, he would still maintain, was due to the applicant. He did not, however, receive such a one as matter of course, although not regarding himself bound by the former proceedings in the case, as *ipso facto* final and conclusive against him. A mere breach of college rules, even though accompanied by some degree of confessed contumacy, would not justify universal and hopeless exclusion. Each special case was to be decided by itself. A Brainerd, he would say, had once been expelled from Yale College for offences like these. If, however, he found, on examination, that there was something very bad in the case, some special depravity of character beyond contempt of college rules, then whatsoever might be his commiseration for the individual, he would not allow his strong passion for the recovery of such a one to outweigh the fear of danger to those already under his charge, or the hazard of moral contagion that might be introduced.

"My object, as yours, is to depict the man as he was. His general reasoning may, sometimes have been wrong, or he may have erred in applying it to particular cases; but his motives were noble; there was nothing sordid about him, nothing time-serving, nothing that could be called unfair. He rejoiced in the success of all our colleges, and he was the last man to seek to build up, by any underhand means, the institution over which he presided, or to increase its numbers at the expense of others. My own connection with the college, as a graduate, as one intimately familiar with its history, and, of later years, as a member of its faculty, warrants me in indignantly repelling any such imputation, upon Dr. Nott, or upon the institution of which he was so long the honored head.

"I have thus endeavored to give both sides to the question respecting Dr. Nott's general policy, stating fairly the objections to it, and the evils to which such a course might lead in other hands. In one respect, however, I must say, that, whatever name we may give to it, Dr. Nott 'managed' better than any president, or any faculty, I ever heard of. Every once in awhile there comes a report of what are called rebellions in some of our colleges. Some special grievance is alleged. There is a class rising. Very bold and determined resolutions are passed. Our omniscient newspapers take it up. Some favor the students; others give good advice to the faculty to stand firm, and not suffer wholesome discipline to be relaxed or overborne. The institution is threatened with ruin. There is, at first, a great manifestation of spirit on both sides. The authorities cannot give up the obnoxious study, or the obnoxious ordinance. The students are required to yield. There is, in fact, the show of submission, sometimes; but it too often happens that they gain the substantial victory in the end. They are ostensibly brought to obey; but it is with the understanding that, in return for this appearance of deference to authority, the offensive regulation is to be repealed after a season, or modified, or made optional in its observance, or something less stringent introduced in its stead. Now Dr. Nott, accommodating and discipline-relaxing as some were disposed to think him, never yielded to a college rebellion. He always conquered it, put it down completely, and by the most effectual measures. This he accomplished by that legitimate 'management' which his sagacity, his keen perception of character, and of the best modes of dealing with men or boys, enabled him successfully to practise. A few of the boldest he would immediately, and without any parley, send home to their parents. This prompt *in terrorem* process prepared the way for dealing more effectually with the timid and irresolute. While all were expecting some fearful blow, some universal sweep of dismission, he would be 'managing' with them privately. He had studied every individual in the class, and could readily decide as to the kind of moral artillery that could be brought to bear on each. He knew exactly how to adapt himself to the fears of the cowardly, the bluster of the vain, the moral or religious principle of the conscientious. He would do this all alone, discarding all meetings or resolutions of the faculty, which he viewed as simply empty counterblasts to the similar proceedings of the students, and calculated rather to strengthen them in their course. Very soon the bold resolvers would find their counsels all divided. Irresolution would be everywhere betraying itself. Those who were abashed by the thought that they themselves were the only ones who had shown symptoms of yielding, received encouragement in *duty,* as they were pleased to regard it, by finding others in the same dutiful predicament. Mutual distrust—a good thing among wrong-doers—relaxed all the nerves of the conspiracy ; the *esprit-de-corps* was lost, and when the stronger ones found everything thus going to wreck, they consulted their fancied honor, and soothed its hurt in so fair a plea for yielding. In short, Dr. Nott always broke them up, and so strong became the opinion of his being irresistible in this way, that rebellions and conspiracies in Union College became of very rare occurrence. No other institution of its age has had so few of them. Our old files of newspapers may be searched in vain for such occurrences, yielding, as they generally do, some of the most spicy items of general interest.

"'Union' has been called the college of practical men, successful men, who have done honor to their Alma Mater in the highest senatorial, judicial, and diplomatic stations. This common view of the institution, however, should not cause to be overlooked, as it sometimes does, the effect of Dr. Nott's teaching and personal influence in spheres of life widely different from these. Union College ever sent forth her full share of delegates to our theological seminaries. The most useful, and a good portion of the most honored, clergymen in our land have been from her training. She has had a large representation in the missionary field. The pioneers in the early Sandwich Island missions—one of whom, the Rev. Artemas Bishop, has lately died at an advanced age—left her halls, in 1820, for the distant work to which they had consecrated their lives. It were superfluous to speak of the large number of ministers in the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches, who have been prepared for their work by his instructions. It may be noted, however, as something that might not have been expected, that no less than seven among the earliest and most influential bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church—constituting a large portion of the Episcopal body when bishops were less numerous—are to be numbered among the pupils of Dr. Nott. A good proportion of the 'other clergy' of that church were the subjects of a similar training. Of these ministers and bishops, some were Low Church men, as the term is, others have been distinguished for ecclesiastical *altitude,* others for theological *breadth.* It seems remarkable that he should have been loved and honored by men so different. Dr. Nott himself held, not polemically, but very sincerely, the old-fashioned Puritan and Presbyterian theology, as has been already said. Strangely combined with this, as some would think, there was ever a progressive element in his character, which led him to appropriate every truth that met him in advance, while abandoning no strong positions that he had held before. It might even be called a radical temperament, actually growing more youthful in its aspect as he advanced in years, and making him more ready to receive new ideas at the age of seventy and eighty, than he had been at thirty or forty. And yet some of the most conservative men of the country were among his pupils. Such versatility of influence can only be accounted for on the ground of remarkable strength as well as originality of character. He was, in fact, a many-sided man. The word might convey to some an unfavorable meaning. I use it, however, not to his disparagement, but as an evidence of his greatness. There need be no timidity in applying to him this epithet. He was truly great, not as a philosopher, not as a scholar, or a devotee of science in any of its branches, but as *a man*—a man of splendid action attended by greatly varied results. He was a creator of energy. He imparted force to all who came fully under his influence, in whatever department of life, of study, of private or official station, that energy might receive a call for its exercise.

"As an eminently practical man, Dr. Nott gave the institution over which he so long presided the same name and character. As has been already said, he devised plans for partial and scientific courses, having more of the forensic than the scholastic aspect, years before their introduction into other colleges had been even thought of, and when the change brought unfriendly criticism rather than laudation. It was his pride to make strong men, or men in whom energy, force of character, a true ambition, a power of overcoming obstacles, and of winning their way in life, should be predominant. The times, of which he was ever a keen observer, led him to such a view. The rapid growth of our young national life seemed to be creating a demand for such men, and such a training. In pursuing this course, he was eminently successful, as the statistics presented have already shown. At the same time he was very far from being insensible to the value of the scholastic, or, as it may be termed, the purely literary culture—in other words, the theoretical as distinguished from the directly practical aspect of education. The latter seemed, then, most needed. Excess, however, in this direction would work its own cure. The balancing of the times would create a demand for the other culture, and he always stood ready to supply it, or to give it prominence, when that more favorable period should arrive. There is, elsewhere, an allusion to Dr. Nott's early classical tastes, his fondness for Homer, and even for the lighter and more graceful aspects of classical culture, as shown in a beautiful and scholarly tract by him on Latin Versification, now out of print. When I first came to Union College as a teacher, it was a great pleasure to converse with this revered instructor on these aspects of education. 'You are fond of Greek,' he would say to me. 'It is a noble study, and may it ever retain its place in our colleges. I care less for Greek than you do, and less for books, generally, as a means of educational discipline. But a college must have a wide curriculum, to be varied or enlarged as circumstances may demand. All kinds of men and minds are needed. Make the boys as fond of Greek as you can. If you can infuse into their minds a love of the old literature, and of the old philosophy, that is the very purpose for which we have called you here. Go on; ride your own hobby, but do it becomingly; do not rail, as you are sometimes inclined to do, at the practical, the utilitarian, the scientific, but make as much as you please of your own department, and I will give you all the aid in my power.' Such was the spirit, and such the substance of his friendly counsel. He had the same feeling toward the other more speculative or philosophical departments. To make men of energy, 'men of action,' was his favorite idea. But books, philosophy, literary culture, even the scholastic logic, could they receive due attention, or could the time be given to them, would make them still stronger, besides the intrinsic value that such studies possessed in themselves, or as entering into the soul's intellectual furniture. Bishop Alonzo Potter, long a professor in the college, and for many years its vice-president, agreed well with Dr. Nott in his main views of practical education as adapted to the more pressing demand of the times. But when this character of the college had become established and widely known, his own mind turned more to the other field of culture. He expressed this in a conversation with me a few years before Dr. Nott's death. Allusion was made to Dr. Laurens P. Hickok, a man distinguished for his devotion to speculative philosophy, and who was expected, at that time, to succeed Dr. Nott. It was thought, and Bishop Potter concurred in the opinion, that, instead of being unfavorable, his peculiar studies and his peculiar turn of mind, if not carried too far in the opposite direction, might give the college more of this scholastic, theoretical, and scholarly aspect which seemed now demanded, and furnish the occasion for mingling with its long cherished practical aims an adaptedness to make it more distinguished for abstract thought, as well as immediate utilitarian action. Dr. H. remained president but a very short time, and is now devoting himself exclusively to his beloved philosophical studies, doing the world rich service in the completion of those valuable books which, in spite of all discouragement arising from their abstruse speculative difficulties, will give him rank as the American Leibnitz, and place him high among the most distinguished metaphysicians of the world. Dr. Aiken, who presided two years, entertained ideas similar to those expressed by Bishop Potter. They have been still more favorably cherished by the present head, a son of Bishop Potter and a grandson of Dr. Nott. The enlarged field of instruction under its new university character, and as connected with the Albany departments of law and of medicine, gives greater opportunity for carrying out this wider plan, and introducing, along with the immediately practical, a higher culture than was consistent with the aims of the older régime. After a season of depression, efforts in this direction are bidding fair for eminent success, while still preserving that peculiar character for which the institution was so long famed. To give it such wider sphere, the course of study has been much enlarged, and a higher standard of preparation rigorously required. This, instead of diminishing, tends to increase the number of students. With hereditary energy derived to him through two generations, Dr. Eliphalet Nott Potter is now using every effort to make effectual this university scheme. Himself in the prime of life, he has the vigorous coöperation of a faculty composed mainly of younger men now worthily coming into the places of the elder. With such means there is a fair prospect that both aims of a college, commenced and long conducted under such fair auspices, may be fully secured. The practical and the scholarly will each secure their due support, in such a way as to meet the expectations of its patrons, and of its thousands of alumni in every part of our land.

"I have written you a longer letter than I intended, but the subject is an important one in its general aspects. In its particular associations it has for me a deep personal interest, and, as enabling me to correct prevalent, and in some respects injurious misapprehensions, I may flatter myself with the hope of having rendered a public service.

"Most respectfully yours,

"TAYLER LEWIS."

CHAPTER XIII.

DR. NOTT AS A TEMPERANCE REFORMER—HIS BIBLICAL EXEGESIS.

1820—Prosperity of the college—Increasing numbers—The Temperance Reform—Dr. Nott's early advocacy—Temperate measures and action recommended—Letter to Dr. Tucker—Total abstinence defended, but with an avoidance of all denunciation—Letter to Mr. Delavan—Advice against connection with politics—Forcible prohibition ineffectual when in advance of public sentiment—Respect for conscience and the opinions of others—Dr. Sewall's plates of the inebriate's stomach—Controversy among physicians respecting them—Dr. Nott's sagacious treatment of the question—His wise and convincing letter, in the "Enquirer."—Letter of Mr. Garretson—Dr. Nott's course of lectures on temperance—His biblical exegesis—"Good and bad wines"—A general view of the Bible doctrine—The vivid picture in Proverbs xxiii. 29-35—Dr. Nott's letter and advice to a fallen graduate—Thomas F. Marshall—Impressive incident.

UNDER its sagacious and energetic head, Union College had, at length, reached a fair measure of prosperity. Its financial state was much improved. Though pressure still remained, its burdens were borne more lightly, and its prospects of being completely relieved were steadily growing brighter. The struggle to endow it had been long and severe, and the degree of success which had attended it, was a source of high gratification, not only to Dr. Nott, but to the friends of the institution, who had entered into his plans and given them a hearty support. He had devoted time, labor, and whatever resources he could command, to the work of placing the college in a position free from embarrassments, that it might thus deserve as well as receive public confidence and support. This was now done, and everything was giving assurance that the college had really entered on a career of growing usefulness and honor.

With all the care and labor bestowed upon this object by President Nott, he was not so much absorbed in its affairs as to be deaf to the call of duty from the outside world. He was a close observer of the signs of the times; took a deep interest in the great moral and social questions which began to arise, and stood ready to cast his influence in behalf of any true reformatory measures. Among these, the temperance movement no sooner urged its claims upon the philanthropist than it met from him a warm response. He had long felt the evils which this social reform was designed to remedy. His position as an instructor of youth, especially, aroused him to such an effort. He had under his care large numbers of young men, whose success in life, and personal happiness, depended upon their not yielding to the seductions of intemperance. He saw their danger, and felt how necessary it was to guard them against it by timely counsels. He was, therefore, soon arrayed in the ranks of the foremost and most pronounced advocates of this reform. He did not embark in the cause inconsiderately. He did not counsel or assent to violent and denunciatory measures. He never could be a bigot in anything. He had no sympathy with that class of reformers who harshly condemned all who did not see principle or duty in the same light in which they happened to see it themselves. He preferred persuasion to force, mild entreaty to censure and rebuke. He feared lest the harsher course might convert men into fixed opponents of measures which, under more considerate treatment, they might be led to support. In a letter to the Rev. Dr. Tucker, then of Troy, New York, he sets forth, with much sound sense and discrimination, his views on the temperance question, and the conciliatory course he felt bound to adopt toward those, whose good will he had no reason to distrust, but who were not yet prepared to take quite as advanced ground as himself. The letter is doubly interesting, as showing at how early a day the students under his care had been thoroughly taught the merits of the temperance movement, and had already formed organizations for their own protection.

"UNION COLLEGE, January 12, 1830.

"DEAR SIR: Your favor has come to hand. I have not time to enter into the discussion of the questions suggested, and can only, in general terms, offer opinions without giving in detail the reasons on which they are founded. That I may not be thought heretical on this subject, I will premise that I am altogether an advocate for temperance societies, and for total abstinence. I would also say that the first temperance society * in this State was formed in Union College; that it still exists and commands my entire approbation.

"Having said this about the college, I am also prepared to say that, were I going out through the land as an agent in the cause of temperance, I should adapt my measures, and modify my articles of association, everywhere, to the existing state of things. It is useless to go very far beyond public opinion, and what cannot be done in some good degree of connection with it should not be attempted. Change the state of society, enlighten public opinion, correct the public taste; and the dramshops will be closed, of course."

The letter proceeds, at some length, to distinguish between "the use and the abuse," and to insist upon other topics now deemed commonplace, though still, in some other form perhaps, furnishing the staple in argument of those who would be thought most wise and conservative on this subject. As now employed, much of it would seem like the language of adversaries disguising hostility under an affected air of prudence and moderation. As used by Dr. Nott, in the early stages of the discussion, it had a freshness now lacking to it, while his unmistakable earnestness excluded all thought of evasion, or of concealed opposition, such as a similar style of language would now suggest. It is in harmony, too, with his general character as manifested in

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* Dr. Nott is mistaken here. The very first temperance society known to exist was formed, in 1808, more than twenty years before this, in the town of Moreau, Saratoga county, New York. It was a country, at that time, devoted to the lumber business, with its strong temptations to excessive drinking. The two principal founders were Billy J. Clark, a distinguished physician of Saratoga, and Lebbeus Armstrong, pastor of the Congregational Church in Moreau. They both died a few years ago, the first aged eighty-nine, the second several years above ninety.—T. L."

everything on which he was called to act. *Festina lente* was his maxim: *hasten,* but not in a *hurry.* Be firm, but ever cautious; the zeal that is lacking here puts back instead of advancing the cause of truth and of substantial progress. In a later portion of the letter he thus proceeds to disarm all uncharitableness by a picture of the universal participation in this heretofore unsuspected indulgence.

"I can well remember when it had a place on all our tables, and on all our side-boards. The illumination obtained is very recent. We claimed to be Christians when we ourselves used this abomination, as we are now ready to call it. . . . . Shall those who have just wiped their lips arraign, as hypocrites, men less favored than themselves, or less apt to learn, it may be, or who are just beginning that process of reformation through which their self-righteous rebukers have so very recently passed. I do not mean to drink strong liquors myself. I will persuade as many as I can to join me in abjuring them; but I will not condemn my yet unconvinced brother for refusing to go the length that I have gone. I will argue with him. If I am right, I will trust that, with the blessing of God I shall, in the end, convince him of it. But till then, as I cannot bind his conscience, I will not attempt to control his conduct. Nor should he, were the case reversed, control mine. The Church is powerless whenever she goes beyond the conscience; in such a case her censures are no longer heeded. It is well that it is so; for if it were not, another despotism might be established on this side of the Atlantic, less terrible only than the despotism of Rome, once established in the other. There is a tendency to extremes in everything; and in everything the weakness of poor human nature appears. Some must be more wise than the Bible, some more orthodox, and some—alas that it should be so!—more moral. Important changes can only be brought about by time. Whatever is done by violence is ill done; for it is against the normal law of Christianity. There is a preparation of speech no less than of action. The time may not have come for the full declaration of the truth, or the unveiled message that is yet to be delivered. There were things that Jesus Christ had to say which he said not, because his disciples could not learn them yet. Are we wiser now? I think not. But though my opinion is against forcing reform beyond the line for which society is prepared, let us not be dilatory in such preparation. Let us not cease to teach our brother, to entreat him, to pray to God in his behalf, and for the great cause of social sobriety as a chief means of spiritual soundness, until society, civil and ecclesiastical, is prepared for the utter abjuring of that common enemy to health, happiness, and religion.

"Sincerely yours,

"E. NOTT."

The ground thus taken was that of the most active and influential temperance advocates in that day. Total abstinence from all intoxicants of every kind was not yet the established rule or policy of temperance organizations. It soon became so. It was not long before the advocates of partial abstinence found the old ground untenable, and they, accordingly, soon took a higher and more impregnable position. Dr. Nott was among the first in coming up to this advanced standpoint. Having taken it, he became one of its foremost and most influential advocates, continuing so through all the remaining years of his life. He did not, however, go the full length of some ardent temperance men who pronounced all use of intoxicants as a beverage a sin *per se*. In this respect, the opinions he stated so clearly in the letter to Dr. Tucker he adhered to substantially through life. He was always calm and rational, never violent and denunciatory. He drank no wine himself, but did not doubt that others, as honest and as conscientious as himself, might drink it in moderation without sin. They may not have had the light of his experience. Such men might be won by persuasion, when they could not be driven by harsh words to abandon the indulgence they deemed innocent.

In his numerous public addresses he portrayed the evils of intemperance with terrific vividness. No man excelled him in presenting such a picture, with all its ghastly details of woe, sorrow, blight, disease, ruin, and death, whether as inflicted on individuals or on society. In view of all these came his powerful appeals to the understanding, the heart, the conscience, urging every one to take part in the great work of checking the progress of this grim destroyer, by word and act, by example, by direct personal influence.

These appeals were often overwhelming. Again and again came to him the cheering report of the effect wrought by them upon individuals among the audiences he addressed. Multitudes, who had yielded to no other oratory, were brought to range themselves on the side of temperance, and to become thenceforth its most earnest supporters.

In his ardor to promote the cause with whose progress the welfare of society is so closely allied, Dr. Nott was ready to avail himself of every weapon, scientific or physical, as well as moral. In 1841 there were given to the public the plates of the human stomach, prepared by the late Dr. Sewall of Washington from actual examination of this organ in health, and in various stages of disease caused by intoxicating drinks. They produced a marked sensation, and were eagerly seized upon by the friends of temperance as a strong ally in enforcing their arguments. A hot controversy, however, sprang up as to the reliability of the plates. If they did not tell the truth, they must rather harm than benefit a cause in whose behalf they were offered. The Albany Medical College, by a vote of its faculty, refused to have the plates hung up in its halls, on the ground of their alleged inaccuracy. In an able series of letters to Mr. E. C. Delavan, Dr. Thomas Hun, of high standing both as a man and a physician, set forth his reasons for not accepting as true what the plates delineated. Mr. Delavan, on the other hand, gathered numerous testimonials from medical men, more or less eminent, in favor of the substantial accuracy of their representation. These were published in the ‘Enquirer,” a paper issued and supported by Mr. Delavan in the interests of temperance. The contest was a lively one, and attracted much attention in its day. Dr. Nott took the side of Dr. Sewall. After examining the matter with his usual care, he regarded the plates as telling substantially the truth. With this conviction, he availed himself of the terrific lessons they inculcated, to aid his arguments. Declining, as was his usual way, to take part in a newspaper controversy, he formed his own opinion deliberately on the merits of the question, and having thus decided, unhesitatingly used these plates in his lectures, as a means of impressing more deeply the evils of intemperance as set forth in their speaking pictures. He exhibited Dr. Sewall's drawings for illustration, in addresses to the students, to audiences in the legislative chamber at Albany, to temperance meetings in New York, Boston, and other cities.

When this newspaper controversy was at the hottest he was appealed to for his opinion, and responded in a letter from which some extracts are here subjoined. It is written in that calm, dispassionate style so characteristic of him, and without a particle of acerbity toward opponents. It is interesting, too, as exhibiting his way of making discriminations between truth as ascertained, and truth as simply alleged, though on the best authority, and then presenting distinctly his own views, with the grounds on which he held them. Differences in the appearances of stomachs of different inebriates, it was maintained, detracted from the accuracy of Dr. Sewall's drawings as general testimony pertaining to all stomachs thus diseased. On this he says:

"Though these drawings were as perfect resemblances as the images reflected from a mirror, they would be perfect resemblances only of the individual specimens actually dissected in the several states in question.

"No two human countenances are alike, whether seen in health, or in sickness, or after death. How then can it be expected that two human stomachs should perfectly resemble each other, and present the same traces of the effects of alcohol, unvaried by other causes? Each one must have its own distinctive peculiarities—peculiarities that mark its individuality and visibly distinguish it from every other. Still, in each case, individual stomachs may be selected to represent, and represent truly, the class to which they severally belong, whether in a state of health, or of disease as affected by alcoholic poisons. The inquiry must be carried through all the successive stages, as exhibited in cases of the habitual free drinker, the drunkard, the drunkard after a debauch, and after delirium tremens; which several selections, though faultless as symbols, will, notwithstanding, not be found, on comparison, to agree entirely with any other stomach in the whole class at the head of which each symbol stands. The same would be true in physiognomy. No one conversant with this science will doubt whether portraitures could be selected from individuals in health, in sickness, and in death, that might stand as expressive representations of the well-known phases which the human countenance assumes, in the successive transitions from health, through disease, to death. And yet, were a comparison to be instituted between these portraitures, and the faces of thousands in each several class, for which they severally stand as representations, not one in any class could be found in which discrepancies could not be pointed out between it and the portraiture with which it was compared."

He then states the results of such dissection furnished by two well-known physicians, as going to illustrate slight discrepancies, while agreeing in the main fact as set forth by the drawings, and then forcibly presents the whole matter in these words:

"As to the dispute about the *temperate drinker's* stomach, it is a dispute, it seems to me, about words, and arises out of the different construction put on the term '*temperate drinker.*' I do not believe that either of the professional gentlemen concerned wishes to be understood as asserting that such habitual use of intoxicating liquors as Dr. Sewall describes in connection with this print, may not produce disease long before the person so indulging shall come to be classed by people generally among the common drunkards."

"It is, I believe, a fact admitted among physiologists, that the veins of the stomach collapse when it is empty, becoming more or less distended when it is again supplied with food; and also, that other irritants besides alcoholic poison produce inflammation in this organ. Still, I believe, it is also an admitted fact, that these poisons are among the most common and most active agents in causing such effect.

"After making all due concessions, I have no doubt that these prints may be made a *legitimate* as well as a powerful auxiliary in promoting the temperance cause. Indeed, when lecturing, I have found them such myself, and nothing like their exhibition has so impressed me with the truth of the old adage '*that seeing is believing.*' I have known them to excite a deep interest in a whole audience, and particularly among inebriates, some of whom, impressed with an overwhelming sense of their own danger, have rushed forward at the close of the lecture, to inquire whether there remained any hope for them, at the same time eagerly craving the privilege of signing the total abstinence pledge.

"Still, like all fearful remedies, these may be abused, especially in the hands of ignorant or vulgar men; and as to their exhibition in certain places, it must be expected that a difference in opinion will exist even among the friends of temperance. There are in the world people of very different tastes; and it may not be agreeable to all men, at all times and in all places, to have certain things, however perfectly represented, brought before their eyes.

"Instructive as are these prints in certain places, and on certain occasions, still, it must be admitted that some of them present views, and awaken associations which are not at all times agreeable. It seems to me, therefore, that the professors in the Medical College are the best judges as to the most befitting place for the same, so far as their institution is concerned. I am also of opinion that the question of their location in the buildings of that institution is not of such consequence to the public as to call for protracted newspaper discussion.

"As to the propriety of placing these prints on board the various craft that float on our canals, rivers, lakes, and even on the ocean, I have no doubt, they are eminently suited to the condition of seamen, many of whom cannot read, and many of whom are ignorant of our language. Among such they are peculiarly calculated (speaking as they do to the eye) to awaken attention, to excite interest, and to convey useful knowledge as to the anatomy of the stomach as well as the pathology of drunkenness.

"The design in contemplation appears to me to be a benevolent one, full of promise, and more deserving of favor, because intended to benefit a class to whom we are greatly indebted, and whose mental and moral culture has, notwithstanding, been long and grievously neglected. I do not believe that the gentlemen in the Medical College, whatever opinion they may entertain as to the propriety of hanging these plates in a particular room, have any design to thwart the wishes of the friends of seamen, in their application to the Legislature. On the contrary, I have no doubt that if this question were left to be decided on its merits, apart from any local issue, they will be disposed to favor, rather than impede the progress of the bill now before the Assembly.

"Had I not been unwell I should have preferred to say, in a personal interview, what I have thus offered in reply to your letter. I hope, however, to be able to go to Albany in a few days, and, in the meantime (though I do not forbid the publication of what I have written, if you deem it necessary) I should prefer, if any use is made of it, that it should be private and confidential.

"Very respectfully yours, etc.,

"ELIPHALET NOTT.

"UNION COLLEGE, February 17, 1843."

A noble letter, every one must say, who calmly and attentively reads it. Aside from its philanthropic design, it furnishes an impressive exhibition of the moral and mental characteristics of the writer. How perfectly conclusive in its argument, and yet how christianly careful to avoid giving offence to any who might differ from its positions. That picture of the poor frightened inebriate "rushing forward to ask if there might yet be hope for him"; how full of pathos, and yet how unpretending in its statement! How little show of a technical logic, and yet in what form could reasoning plead more powerfully with the soul!

When this letter was written, Dr. Nott was not only occupying the ground of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, but was a warm advocate of the principle, exerting all his influence by pen, voice, and example, to secure its universal acceptance. He was recognized, and had been for several years, as among the foremost and ablest of those who were devoting time and strength to this reform. Letters from country towns, as well as from the larger cities, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, were constantly coming to him, conveying urgent requests that he would address meetings. Requests like these he rarely declined. In a letter from his friend the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson of Rhinebeck, New York, dated March 4, 1829, he was invited to address the Dutchess County Temperance Society, to be held in that village. In this letter, Mr. Garrettson says:

"Your former lectures in this place were heard with profound regard. I fear you will think us unreasonable in so soon calling upon you to come up again to our aid. But, sir, the magnitude of the cause impels us to look for such advocates as we conceive are best calculated to promote its interests. You have influence in this community, and can collect together many of our most influential citizens, who have hitherto stood at a distance, as though they had neither part nor lot in the matter. Through your instrumentality they may be brought to act under the temperance banners. This is the only apology we have to offer for taxing your zeal and benevolence in this cause of God and man."

The letter shows that these services had been freely given, in that locality, on other occasions; but such an appeal seldom failed to secure his presence. Before 1829 he had been a zealous temperance advocate, and during all the following years to the close of his long life, or while the strength remained to labor, his services continued to be invoked and were unreservedly rendered in support of the cause he had so much at heart. Even in extreme old age he occasionally appeared before audiences as the advocate of abstinence; while constantly giving advice, sometimes written, sometimes oral, to all who sought it. In a characteristic letter to Mr. E. C. Delavan, dated August 14, 1855, when he was eighty-two years old, he expresses his fears that the temperance reform might lose much of its former prestige and strength, by being mingled with politics and the bitter strifes of parties.

"DEAR SIR: Yours of the 13th is at hand. I am just leaving again, and shall be gone the greater part of a fortnight. I want to see you. Great wisdom is needed and may be exercised, though the probability is that it will not be, and that temperance instead of being a great moral power will become a political engine. In that case, instead of being, what it should be, a regulator of other movements, it will itself become a political party, met, resisted, worsted, if not even wholly defeated by its more worldly and wary antagonists. But I have thought, and still think, that it will be very difficult to prevent this. If it becomes a political party it will share the fate of other political parties. Ultra men prevail whenever excitement exists, and it is only in the calm that the voice of reason is heard."

Dr. Nott's hostility to this tendency was decided and unyielding. His views, as above expressed, never under-went a change. He regarded the movement as a moral one purely, and as owing all its strength to moral influences. He deprecated resort to coercive measures in order to restrain men from doing what they were not impelled to abandon by argument and conscientious conviction. He believed in the force of light and truth until, at least, the popular mind should have become educated, and ripe for sustaining whatever prohibitory legislation might be found necessary. Another topic is introduced in the foregoing letter, setting forth one of his favorite theories. He was convinced that there are two kinds of wine mentioned in the Scriptures: the one good, the other bad; the one, pure juice of the grape, not fermented and not intoxicating, the other deleterious because fermented—the one spoken of in connection with a blessing, the other in connection with a curse.

Of the explanation of this thesis, it may at least be said that it is elaborate, ingenious, and plausible. It has the assent, to a great degree, of Professor Moses Stuart, one of the greatest Biblical authorities. It is presented in two or three lectures, out of a course of ten which he delivered in Schenectady, in 1838, 1839, and repeated in other places. The whole series commanded much attention, not only in this country, but in England. There is opened and discussed a wide range of topics connected with temperance, and they are treated throughout with signal ability. In regard to most of these the positions taken are unexceptionable. As to the postulate concerning the good and bad wine of the Bible, it need only be said that by the majority of Biblical critics the argument is not now held to be conclusive. He never claimed to be a Hebrew scholar, and he always had the good sense to ask the advice of others, like Professor Stuart, who were eminent in this department. Still it may be said that he obtained the ethical idea, and the ethical distinction of the Scripture, whatever mistake may have occurred in his verbal exegesis. As he has been blamed, however, for entering on this field, a few paragraphs devoted to the Bible aspect of the temperance movement, to which he was so devoted, may not be out of place in his biography. In one respect, it may be said to be still a *lis pendens*, in which Dr. Nott was *virtually* right. The general argument has great force, when removed from the strict letter of the Scriptures, and viewed as presenting a question of difference between ancient Palestinian and modern French, Spanish, and German wines, or of such a diversity in the general manufacture and the general use, as takes away all force from the alleged Scriptural approbation so often urged by the pious opponents of abstinence. Whatever exceptions may be taken to Dr. Nott's exegesis, or his arguments about *tirosh* and *shekar* and *yayin*, he certainly had the truth on his side in maintaining that such abominable mixtures as are commonly sold in our modern saloons and restaurants, or in our best hotels, or that frequently stand upon the side-boards of gentlemen commercial, literary, or clerical, could never have had the signal divine sanction that is claimed for them, or been really healthful to Timothy's dyspeptic stomach. The wine that our Saviour is said to have made at Cana may have had some degree of alcohol in it, as Dean Alford insists, when he draws from the event no higher lesson than that of a prophetic rebuke to modern "fanatics," but it was certainly very different from the best kind of brandied wines now most commonly used at weddings. Change in the article called wine, change in its logical essence or logical relation as now associated with other stronger liquors before unknown, change in the human constitution that has been the consequence, and the strange aspects of inebriation, or drink-madness, that have come from long use of such poisonous mixtures—all these considerations give an entirely new face to the argument, and render utterly obsolete all such appeals to scriptural *sanction* as used formerly to be urged. The mention of wine in the Bible, whatever may be the degree of its alcoholic strength, is most commonly by way of descriptive illustration, used according to the knowledge of the writer, and forming no part of his real inspiration. This is concentrated upon the primary idea, to the expression of which everything else in the diction, whether as figurative, illustrative, or emphatic, is strictly subordinate. Or it occurs as incidental to some narration in which it forms no part of the ethical force, as in the history of a miracle where divine power is the great idea presented, or of ecclesiastical events, as in the advice of Paul to Timothy, where Christian love—the love of the spiritual father for his spiritual son—and not the scientific correctness of his medical prescription, is the inspired lesson, the exceedingly suggestive lesson, to which we are to take heed. In the really *ethical* parts of the Bible, however, or in passages where the ethical style is predominant, as in the Proverbs and in the vivid denunciations of the prophets, the mention of wine, whether in its weaker or stronger forms, is almost always by way of warning and condemnation. If we would feel the very heart of the Bible on this subject, nowhere do we more distinctly find it than in that most graphic passage Prov. xxiii. 29–35. Never were the evils of wine-drinking, or the danger of any *incipient* yielding to it, more strongly set forth ; and for this purpose is it most effectively employed by Dr. Nott in his published book of lectures : "Who hath woe ? Who hath sorrow ? Who hath contentions ? Who hath babbling ? Who hath wounds without cause ? Who hath redness of eyes ? They that tarry long at the wine ; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thy heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as one that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth on the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick ; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not ; when shall I awake ? I will seek it yet again." It is nothing like our brandy, or whiskey, that is here described as doing this.

It was not "the mingled drink," the *mimsak,* or wine mingled with spicy drugs. That is simply mentioned to heighten the climax of the drunkards progress. It was not the *shekar,* or "strong drink" (*potus inebrians*), to which wine-drinking in its later stages always leads. These are only referred to for the rhetorical clearness and force of the parallelism. The article which forms the one subject of this striking passage* was the pure juice of the grape, unmixed

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* The readers of this biography, who are friends of that cause to which Dr. Nott was so strongly devoted, will doubtless pardon an attempt to bring this passage nearer to the original in its force, by making it more like it in its form. It is nearly rhythmical as given in our common English version. A few changes, with the preservation of the Hebrew parallelistic divisions, will serve for such a purpose. Aside from its divine vehemence of warning, we may say, that, for vivid painting there is nothing equal to it in the choicest citations from the Greek Anthology. The numbering of the verses corresponds to that of the Bible.

29. To whom is alas ?
To whom is ah me ?
To whom are strifes ?
To whom remorseful muttering ?
To whom are causeless wounds ?
To whom the bloodshot eye ?

30. To them who stay late at the wine;
To them who seek the mingled drink.

31. Look not on the wine with its ruby blush;
When it showeth its eye in the cup;
When it walks (o'er the lips) so pleasantly.

32. At its end, like the serpent, it bites;
Like the venomous adder, it stings.

33. Strange visions thine eyes shall behold;
Wild ravings thy heart shall utter;
34. As one who lies down in the heart of the deep;
Who sleeps on the top of the mast.

35. They smite me; no hurt do I feel;
They pound me; but nought do I know.
O when shall I awake,
To seek it yet again ?

A few exegetical remarks may be permitted. The words rendered *woe* and *sorrow* in the common version (v. 29) are interjections. Verse 31. *Ruby-blush* with other substances, but alcoholic, and in its most stimulating condition. Dr. Nott, in his lectures, regards it as belonging to the class he calls "bad wines"; meaning, by that term, the alcoholic, or intoxicating, as distinguished from the unalcoholic. He also calls it so for a moral reason, which is better that the physical one he first assigns. It is "*bad yayin*," because it is "the wine of woe and sorrow." See his Lectures, page 85. Dr. Nott's Scripture argument, as we have said, was exegetically wrong, though *virtually* right and conclusive as to the real force and bearing of the Scripture language. In another sense, therefore, it may be maintained that the describer here means to represent the substance so exquisitely painted, as the very best of *yayin* then known, or as estimated by the refined taste of the Epicurean sensualist, or of the experienced wine-drinker. This will be more clearly seen from the version given in the note, and the few exegetical remarks appended. Its "redness," or "ruby blush," its seeming "motion" like "a thing of life," its glistening "eye in the cup"

> "Sparkling and bright as liquid light—"

its luscious passage over the palate, are all intended for a rhetorical laudation of its vinous quality. They are given as marks of "the generous old wine," so charming to the poetical imagination. All is brilliant in the first part of

does not go beyond the intensiveness of the Hebrew *yithaddam*—when it is *red;* or *reddens*, not denoting time but quality. *When it walks;* a most literal rendering. The other words are used to express a peculiar Hebraism, an intensive plural of the word for *straightness* used to denote a most direct and easy passage. It goes straight down, *descendit in guttur*—Gesenius; *er gehet glatt ein, goes smoothly down*—Luther. V. 33. *Strange visions;* the common version here has *strange* women, but without any such word in the original, and with little or no authority. It simply means *strange things*, like the Latin *nova, monstrosa, portenta;* they are the horrid sights of the drink-madness, or *delirium tremens*. *Wild ravings;* our common version is etymologically correct, but it lacks force—literally, *things turned upside down*—words *distorted*, *incoherent*. Verse 35. *They smite me.* The Hebrew form of the verb allows a rendering in the present, which is more *vivid* and pictorial. The language following is inconsistent, but true to the reality, as coming from a half-dreaming, semi-conscious state.—T. L.

the picture, or in the description of the wine itself, as preparatory to the awful revelation of the concealed serpent, and the terrible consequences. The "wild ravings," the "scaring visions," the half-dreaming consciousness of some fearful state as given to us in the sudden changes of person so peculiar to the impassioned Hebrew style—they all remind us of that fearful *dipsomania,* drink-madness, or *delirium tremens,* now so common, but which may then have first begun to attract the attention of the early moralist. The lesson is set before us by one who had drained the cup of human pleasure, who knew what was in the wine of the royal sideboard, and who, therefore, gives no fancied sketch. It should be remembered, too, what this lesson really is in its most faithful interpretation. It is no inculcation of prudence, such as the wise and conservative Solomon elsewhere finds occasion to give, much less any denunciation of "fanatical reformers" in the style of the good Dean Alford and other excellent men. It is no exhortation to a "moderate rational use" of God's choice gifts. It is no warning against "excess," such as some might infer from the words: "those who stay late at the wine." That is simply language descriptive of this tempting liquor by one of its most constant effects. Abstinence, *total abstinence,* utter avoidance—if such a lesson can be taught in human speech—is the precept given in this vivid warning against fearful and threatening danger. As in another text of the Proverbs (iv. 15), and in reference to another kindred temptation, the language is unmistakable in its graphicalness: "tear thyself away, pass not by it, turn aside, pass on." So here: "Look not at the wine when it is red," that is, when it is most alluring. Instead of tasting, do not even look at it, trust not your eyes to behold it; there is danger in the very sight. *Abstain wholly from all that may intoxicate,* however alluring and apparently innocent in appearance; such was ever Dr. Nott's exhortation to students in his use of this passage. Its force cannot be over-estimated. As a most positive injunction of *total abstinence,* coming, as it does, in the directly ethical portion of the Scriptures, it is to be regarded as giving, in a most especial manner, the Bible doctrine.

In other aspects, the argument of these lectures is unassailable. Every phase of objection is met, every form of expostulation is most feelingly presented. Trenchant reasoning is aided by apposite illustration, and the appeals, especially in the closing lecture, are overwhelming. The course was printed, and the volume had a wide circulation, reaching a class of minds not often impressed by ordinary lecturers, or the arguments commonly used. They form a valuable contribution to the literature of the Temperance Reform, and in the history of it, in this country, must ever hold a prominent place.

Dr. Nott's position as a guardian of young men was one great cause of his zeal in this movement, and gave great power to his expostulations. The dangers to which students were exposed, and the necessity of constant vigilance to escape them, were frequently set forth and eloquently insisted on, in presence of his classes. Nor was this confined to the college course. He followed those who had gone out from the institution, with words of warning and remonstrance, whenever he heard of their being in special danger. A touching example of this is presented in the following letter:

"MY SON: I have too great an interest in the young, especially in those who have been under my care, to keep silence when I see, or seem to see, evil impending over them. In my opinion this is your case. Nothing but total and everlasting abjuration of all that can intoxicate will save you from ultimate ruin. This you may not believe; it is nevertheless true. Why so? Because you have sometimes drank to excess, to great excess, and, unwarned by that, have not thereafter totally abstained. And yet *total* abstinence alone can save you.

"I have seen much of young men, much of the silent, gradual progress of inebriety, and have said to others in your position, as I would say to you: 'Stop while you can, and when you may'; that is, stop *now*, not to-morrow, or you will never stop, but die early, and die a drunkard.

"These may seem hard words, but they are words of truth and soberness. They are words uttered in the spirit of parental kindness. God grant that you may profit by them. You have taste; you have talents; you have industry—but these will avail nothing without temperance, and, in your case, nothing without *total abstinence.*

"Form that high resolve. Act upon it and you are safe—only safe by so deciding and so acting; and so, I trust, you will decide and act.

"Very truly yours,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

An incident showing his influence on those whom he wished to impress, and the personal urgency he was wont to use to reclaim the erring, occurred under the observation of the one who recounts it, and whose narrative is now presented here, substantially as it was given to the press several years ago.

"In the autumn of 1860, Thomas F. Marshall was advertised to lecture in Schenectady. He was not the Marshall of fifteen years earlier, when he had appeared before audiences in several of the Northern cities, entrancing them with his marvellously eloquent appeals in behalf of temperance; on several of which occasions Dr. Nott had been present, and added his own exhortations to those of the gifted Kentuckian. It was not this Marshall who appeared now to challenge the applauses of a delighted audience, but a man whose fine intellect dissipation had clouded, and whose force had shrivelled before the flames seeking to devour it. He gave a lecture or two on 'History,' in a hall in the city, and to an indifferent show of hearers, and was then invited for the third evening to lecture on 'Henry Clay,' in the college chapel. The room was crowded on the novel occasion, and Marshall appeared before his audience perfectly sober, and in better trim than he had hitherto displayed. His lecture was listened to with deep attention, and at the close of it, he unexpectedly referred to the association of Dr. Nott (then present), with himself, years before, in labors for the promotion of temperance. Then alluding to the different circumstances in which they now met, he said, sadly and touchingly: '*He* could not fall—I did'—adding that, as the result of a long visit the Doctor had paid him the day before, he had firmly resolved *at least to try* to break loose from the sway of an appetite that had done him so much injury. The manly declaration was received with thunders of applause, and not a hearer was present whose best wishes and hopes were not warmly enlisted in behalf of the lecturer's success in the trial he proposed to make. Alas, a brief day served to show that the trial, if made, was made too feebly and irresolutely to insure success. Marshall went his way as he had come; his erratic course ending, ere long—where that of myriads like him had ended—in the grave.

At the time when Marshall was delivering temperance lectures in New York, Dr. Nott was occasionally present to give his influence to the meetings. At one of them, held in the old Broadway Tabernacle, there occurred the following incident: Marshall was to speak, and a large assembly was gathered eager to hear him. He did not, however, make his appearance; the audience grew impatient and, after a time, unruly, showing their discontent by unmistakable signs. Dr. Nott, who was present, was requested to occupy the platform, in some remarks. As he came forward and uttered a few words, in a voice less round and clear than in other days, some in the audience—to the most of whom he was unknown, and who would not receive a substitute for Marshall—began to hiss. The veteran orator seemed at first surprised at such an indignity, offered him now for the first time in his life; but soon there was roused in him the old power to sway men, and so effectively was it exerted that, in a few moments, the audience was perfectly stilled under the influence of his magnetic manner and impressive words. He said what he meant to say, to the most attentive of listeners, and at the close of his brief address, was greeted with hearty applause, which atoned, in some measure, for the former indecorum. To quell a turbulent crowd, disarm hostility, and extort approval, is evidence of a power to move men that is possessed only in rare instances.*

* Related by Dr. A. G. Vermilye.

CHAPTER XIV.

DOMESTIC LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE.

Maria Nott—Mrs. Tillottson's maternal care—Letter of Dr. Nott—Second marriage—Strong domestic attachments—Affection for his daughter—Letters of the father—Moral and religious instruction—Marriage of the daughter—Removal to Boston—Letter to Mr. Potter—Letter to Mrs. Potter—Letter to his grandson.

IT was mentioned in a former chapter that Dr. Nott's only daughter, who, at her mother's death, was a child of only four years, was taken to the home of Mrs. Tillottson of Rhinebeck. This lady gave to her young charge attentions such as a devoted mother might render, and these were requited with the warmest filial affection. This daughter remained for several years under the friendly roof that had sheltered her childhood, continuing to regard it as her home, even when residing in her father's house in Schenectady, whither she was taken for the better advantages of education. A letter written by Dr. Nott to Mrs. Tillottson, in 1807, pleasantly exhibits the feelings of the father, as well as the sentiments of the child toward her who had been truly a benefactress and guardian. Says the writer,

"The little girl who has given you so much trouble, and concerning whom you inquire so affectionately, is in perfect health. She goes to school constantly, and learns with facility.

"Mr. Cuyler's school is a very good one, and Maria will be benefited by continuing in it. How long she can be persuaded to stay is uncertain. She has been, for some time past, strangely discontented, and importunate 'to go home.' She appears to retain her affection for me, but she insists upon it that she can never live with me again. Perhaps her present discontentedness arises from an apprehension that she is to be kept at Schenectady altogether. Some talkative persons have been filling her head with tales of *another mamma*, and another residence, which, together with your going to the country without her, has so excited her fears, that I do not know that she will ever feel serene again till she finds herself under your protection. To convince her that she is in no danger of losing *Mamma Tillottson's care,* I have shown her your letter. This, however, has not reconciled her. She insists upon it that you have sent for her now, and that I must *send her home*, that you can't do without her in the country, and that you will be very angry with her if she does not return. I have endeavored to pacify her, and may, perhaps, reconcile her for the present. If she once gets over her present pain, she will probably become contented until the term closes, when I will take her down."

The event hinted at in the foregoing letter proved to be a reality. The permanent care demanded for the little girl in whose heart nature was calling for a mother, together with the wants of his other children, then so young, all pointed to the natural solution of the difficulty; and on August 3, 1807, Dr. Nott was married to Mrs. Gertrude Peebles Tibbitts, widow of Benjamin Tibbitts, Esq., of Troy. His house was now reopened, and the graceful hospitality which had marked the former one was resumed. His children were united once more in the circle which death had disrupted. In the bosom of his family Dr. Nott ever appeared to great advantage. His domestic attachments were deep and strong. He loved home, and its endearments. He loved his children with all the warmth of an affectionate nature, and,. understanding well the disposition and wants of childhood, he knew what course of treatment was best adapted to win confidence, inspire respect, and make that home a bright and happy one. He could enter into their juvenile sports as blithesomely as if a child himself, and knew just the proper moment when to convey an instructive sentiment, or impress a practical lesson. His children, while they felt free and unconstrained in his presence, yet regarded him with respect bordering on veneration. His daughter was dear to him exceedingly. Her early separation seemed rather to strengthen the tie which bound him to her. He was unwearied in the attention he bestowed upon the training of her mind and heart. This tender and assiduous care was amply repaid. No parent could rejoice in a more affectionate child, or one who better adorned her station in society, as well as in the family. The correspondence between the two, kept up through life, shows how unreserved was the confidence between them, and how deep was the interest taken by the parent in all that concerned the happiness of the child. It is worthy of note how constantly, in his letters to his daughter, Dr. Nott appeals to her religious sense, and how easily he passes from topics of a light and playful character, to those that are deeply serious, whether as involving sacred truth, or personal duty. In one addressed to her when grown to womanhood, and at that time visiting a friend in Boston, he thus speaks :

" Miss M—— says that she met you in Boston, and describes you as in good health, beautiful, and interesting. The *beautiful* I lay out of the question, because it is not probable that the climate of the land of the Pilgrims can have produced any great effect upon the features or form of a transient visitor, and because, if it had, it would be, in the estimation of wisdom, of little account. As to the rest of the statement, I can credit it easily enough, and am bound to join with you in ascriptions of praise to that beneficent Being who has disappointed our fears and made cheerful our hopes.*

" What further designs of mercy He has in reservation we known not, and need not be solicitous to know. Taught as well by the realities of experience as by the promises of Scripture, we may trust our dearest interests to the disposition of our Heavenly Father. Come what will, nothing but sin need distress us, since wisdom and goodness reign."

In another, written about the same time—1820—he says :

" Correspondence by letter, you know, has always been, with me, rather a matter of duty than of pleasure. It is because I have no aptitude for that kind of literary effort. With you it is otherwise. Your statement about muslin I passed over in silence in my last, the omission of a word puzzling me as to the price you intended to mention. Your mother is as much puzzled as I am in supplying the omitted word. She is quite sure that it is very cheap, and very good, and that it is very necessary you should be informed of this in time to make the purchase. So I have promised to give you the information, though I could not help thinking at the time that, as to economy, it would probably be somewhat like that which is spoken of in the memoirs of my old friend the Vicar of Wakefield and family. As for myself, you know I never lay things of that sort much to heart. Only I hope you may not meet with any more lace caps, as they interfere a little with my Quakerism, and the one you sent has occasioned already several pretty warm disputes. This question of caps, you know, has for several years been submitted to my better judgment; and I do not like to have my supremacy interfered with. Besides, it is not altogether clear that the speculations of the head may not be affected by the cap that covers it. . . . I hope the valley that has appeared to your aunt, so dark in prospect, brightens as she approaches nearer to it. A cloud may rest on Jordan and hide from the eye the leader's footsteps, but *he has surely gone before*, and the waters are divided. One short struggle, and the stream, and the darkness that rests upon it, are past, and all beyond is sunshine. Beds of sickness are schools of instruction; and those around them, as well as those upon them, should attend to the lessons. May you, as well as I, have grace to do this. It is well to become familiar with the idea, for we know not when God may fix the time, nor how long he may continue our term of probation. Be it our study to wait his pleasure and be submissive to his will. Religion, after all, is the stay of life. It is hard to live without God; oh, how hard to die! *With* God, both are precious."

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* The reference is to a serious illness which had led her friend to fear lest her mind might become permanently affected.

The following were written to her while on a visit to her early friends at Rhinebeck. The reader will well appreciate the touching simplicity and tenderness that mingle with their mature wisdom, when he bears in mind the extreme youth of the one to whom they are addressed and that that youth had been already marked by suffering.

"To address you again at Rhinebeck awakens a train of emotions of a mingled character. It was the death of your mother that placed you there an orphan—too young, at the time, to know, and too kindly cared for to learn, the miseries of orphanage. There you passed the sunny days of childhood, a stranger to want and care, and there a cloud, transient indeed, but dense, overspread your prospect, shutting out alike the joys of earth and the hope of heaven.

"That cloud has been dispersed; the heavens cleared up, and you are to resurvey the scenes of youth, beneath the sunshine of a brighter day. I doubt not that the rural prospect which, after a long absence you are reviewing, appears rich in beauty. May you look upon it with the strengthened vision of a Christian's eye, a vision that discovers in every plant, and shrub, and flower, a Father's wisdom and a Father's goodness.

"I heard Dr. P—— last evening, and have not often listened to an address more plain, pertinent, and solemn. I love to hear old men preach. The hoary locks and faltering accent, that bespeak the approach of the end of life, give authority to counsel. Standing, as they do, confessedly near the verge of the grave, they seem to have a right to speak without reserve to the multitude who are amused with the dream of mortality."

An accident which befell the daughter, in one of her rural visits, and which came near a disastrous result, drew from her father the following expressive letter:

"I am happy to hear that your accident was attended with no serious injury. Many a one, equally trifling in appearance, has disappointed some parents' hopes, and hurried some child of thoughtlessness, in a moment, to eternity. To God you owe your preservation; to Him belong, therefore, the song of praise and the throb of gratitude. He spreads around you the scenery you admire in your rides and in your walks. He quickens the pulse of youth, and, from a thousand forms, sends through your delighted bosom the tide of joy. His are the prospects you have gazed at, the earth on which you have trod, the flowers you have gathered. Everywhere you have met Him, watching you with an eye that never slumbers, defending you with an arm that is never weary. Have you been mindful of this, my child? Though away from us, have you been at home with God, met him in every place, thought of Him in every situation, honored Him in every company, and in the silence of every casual retirement poured back into His bosom the warm affection of your own?

"Has the note of praise quivered nightly on your lips as you have sunk to rest, and has the light of day guided your opening eye to those heavens from which it came? Be assured, my child, every scene of joy is illusive, except those drawn by the pencil of mercy, nor can the soul made for immortality ever find happiness, till it reposes itself on God. May God keep you.

"E. NOTT."

The following letter, bearing the date of April 10, 1821, written to his daughter, absent for a long time from home, shows how intently his mind was bent upon her welfare, and how habitual it was with him to seek to impress the most weighty lessons of practical piety by illustrations drawn from the natural world, not less than from the Inspired Word. The style may seem to afford occasion for criticism to those who overlook the circumstances under which these letters were written, their adaptedness to a young, opening life, and the exceeding dearness of the one to whom they are addressed. Dr. Nott himself was a lover of nature. In the daughter it was a predominant trait. The allusions were precisely adapted to her own mind. Along with their sweetness and tenderness, there is in these letters an occasional playfulness, mitigating their general sombre tone; and yet even their touching melancholy was in soothing harmony with the saddened temperament of one who, young as she was, had been in the shadow of death, and who required a treatment that should not be marked by too sudden transitions. It was, however, not alone to calm the mind of a beloved child, that this style was adopted. We recognize it in his sermons. The meditative view of nature, the sober contemplation of man and the world, thoughts of death and of the life to come, were ever habitual to Dr. Nott. A species of melancholy tinged his private speech and thought to a degree which was, in a great measure, unknown to those who were familiar only with his public life, so greatly occupied, as it was, with the care of the college, with schemes of invention, and financial perplexities.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO MARIA.

"April 10, 1821.

"That same benignant Being from whom we have received so many mercies, has conducted us safely through the inclemencies of another winter—and every member of our family is alive to hail the opening spring. How many families are there around us who cannot say so much! How many a domestic circle has been invaded by death! How many a bosom that in autumn beat high with joy and hope, has ceased to throb beneath its icy covering!

"Shall not then, we who live, raise high the note of gratitude? The season is not with us as forward and as fine as usual. The fields are not green; the flowers do not blossom, and though a vernal sun declines as usual over the hills beyond us, the cold wind continues to blow from thence. Should such a state of things continue but a *few months* longer, both man and beast must perish—and yet no power on earth can prevent its continuance. Human efforts can neither 'bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, nor loose the bands of Orion, nor bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, nor guide Arcturus with his sons.' These are movements regulated by a different and a higher power—and yet though I know that I can do nothing to insure another harvest, and that there lives not around me a being who can, I am sitting at my ease; and writing as fearless of famine, as though mankind were already in possession of exhaustless granaries. Why? Because, though I cannot insure another harvest, God can.

"The Maker still is present amid the system which He made. He holds the earth on which I tread, and impels along their orbits the worlds I see above me. He has said that seed time and harvest *shall* continue; and because he has said so, we have even a greater certitude of their continuance than we would have, if they were at our own disposal. In the concerns of this world it is quite natural to walk by faith. No one fears, when the sun has disappeared, that night will be eternal; or apprehends that a perpetual gloom will result from every cloud, however dense, that crosses the horizon. On the contrary, each confides implicitly in that great truth revealed to Noah, and signified by the bow of mercy."

How much better philosophers, as well as Christians, are we with respect to *general,* than in regard to *individual* interests. Here, where self only is concerned, a single blast of adversity withers our joy, and even the visions of hope cease unless it is always sunshine. Why is it that we have so much more faith and fortitude in things that concern a world, than in those that concern an individual? Under human superintendence there might be reason for this, but not under divine? God is no more attentive to *great* things than to *small* ones. Vast as his empire is, He has leisure to attend to its minutest compartments. The microscope reveals how much skill is displayed in the finish and the coloring of those delicate and concealed fabrics whose minuteness escapes our vision. But if the fibre of the violet is not beneath the attention of Jehovah, surely the insect cannot be, that plants his habitation on that fibre, and there lives and breathes, and suffers, and enjoys—and if the insect with his little interests is an object of the Almighty's care and kindness, how much more is man, made for immortality—man, who walks the earth, the noblest being that appears throughout this varied field of life and animation?

"This reasoning was sanctioned by the Saviour, when he said, 'Are not *two* sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. Are not ye better than many sparrows?' Very precious are those words of his that follow in the same connection. In reading them we learn that He 'who numbers the stars,' 'numbers also the hairs of our heads;' that all our little individual affairs are overseen by God, and that all our sorrows, as well as joys, form an item in His eternal plan of mercy.

"A seat vacant at the board, and at the altar, reminds us of the absence of one we love, and awakens afresh each successive day the desire for her return. And still these days of absence bring with them, as they return, a source of consolation; for we remember that the morning sun rises not on us, till it has risen on you, and that the evening stars, before they are visible in our twilight have been already seen, in yours. We cannot now, as formerly, look together on the same landscape that here stretches itself *around* us, but all the views of goodness and of grandeur exhibited *above* us, are alike visible to both. The God, too, who exhibits them is visible. There is one attitude of soul in which absence does not remove—nor distance separate. The parent and the child, though cast in different hemispheres, are at home in all that concerns devotion. God forms a bond of union perfect and indissoluble throughout a family too numerous to be counted, and scattered throughout a space too vast for measurement. When living in the same apartment we are thereby no nearer to God; we should be no farther from Him, no nearer to Him, were our dwelling place among the constellations.

"May God bless and preserve you, my child.

"E. N."

This daughter, so much endeared to him and the object of such tender solicitude, was married, in March 1823, to the Rev. Alonzo Potter, the professor of mathematics and natural philosophy in Union College. Professor Potter had graduated from the college in 1818, and had been a tutor in it from 1819 till 1822, when he was elected to the chair he now ably occupied, and which he continued to hold till 1826, when he accepted the rectorship of St. Paul's church in

Boston. He returned, however, to the college in 1831, having accepted the professorship of rhetoric and natural philosophy, in which position he remained till 1845, when he was chosen Bishop of Pennsylvania.

Two years before this marriage, when she was on a short visit to the city of Boston, Dr. Nott wrote to his daughter the following letter, in which he refers to the fact of the removal of several persons who had been tutors in the college, to fields of usefulness in Massachusetts, and closes with some characteristic advice, together with some notices of a literary historical interest.

"Dr. W. has received his call from Boston. He has not yet made up his mind concerning it, though I think he will go there and that he ought to go.

"That two of our tutors should be planted in the capital of New England is extraordinary. That the young men of the East should come among us is natural. The tide of emigration is westward. We have forests to fell, villages to rear, and people to supply with professional talent. But Massachusetts has a surplus population, and, I may say, a surplus literary class from which many useful toilers in other fields may be spared without being specially missed. Should Dr. W. go to Boston he will be the fourth of our tutors who have settled in the ministry in that State. I hope none of them may dishonor the State they have left, and that they may carry with them into their new connection, the same charitable and peaceful spirit they have been accustomed to cherish here. As yet we have one advantage over New England: we are less divided and less contentious in religion.

"While you retain an affectionate attachment, and bear a constant testimony to the religion of your fathers, I hope you will cherish a perfect good-will to them who differ from you. It is the misfortune of disputants to get as far apart as possible, and to hold nothing in common. They would force each other's doctrines to the greatest extremes, and contemplate them in the worst points of light. You must never judge of Calvinism from the statements of Arminians, nor of Arminianism from those of Calvinists; nor of Unitarianism from the representations of either. One thing is certain that, next to fires and scaffolds, controversy is the worst expedient for reclaiming heretics. If you meet with people in error, pity them, and pray for them. Conciliate them by kindness, and recommend your own faith by the practical goodness of your life."

For three years after her marriage Mrs. Potter resided in her own house at the North College building. In 1826, when Professor Potter entered on the duties of the pastoral office in Boston, the daughter was removed from under the paternal eye, and their close association, so delightful hitherto to both, was to all appearance permanently interrupted. Under the feeling which this separation occasioned, Dr. Nott thus writes:

"UNION COLLEGE, October 12, 1826.

"MY DEAR MARIA: In commencing this new correspondence emotions are felt as novel as they are painful. I am indeed familiar with the absence of my children. One and another have been abroad, and I have written them in their absence, but always with the expectation of their ultimate return. Never before have I felt that one had finally departed to come back no more, or to return only as a transient visitor. It is a new experience to feel that the ligaments which so long bound us together are thus sundered, and that out of the elements of our own domestic society the head of a separate dependency has been set up, and the centre of a separate interest established. Yet, so it is. The severance is made, and there has been commenced a second social organization that will continue to extend and ripen into all the cares, and solicitudes, and joys, and sorrows, and responsibilities, of an independent household. While your mother and myself, and the residue of the family remain, sustaining the same relations as before, you and your husband and children have taken possession of another and a distant habitation, where like relations are beginning to be formed, where already parental and fraternal sympathies are felt, where the names of father and mother, and brother and child, have been already many times repeated, and whence a fainter and a fainter look will be cast on that other and former home, until, if not quite forgotten, it will only be occasionally remembered, or remembered with many a sad association of joys gone by, and friends departed.

"In this event, I see distinctly marked another finished stage in life's short, changeful journey. It makes me feel that death must soon complete a desolation which the march of time already has commenced.

"But yesterday, I looked back on my paternal habitation as you do now on yours, and to-morrow your descendants will thus look back on theirs. We cannot now expect to meet often on the earth, nor is it needful that we should. It would have seemed desirable to have you with us during the little residue of our appointed pilgrimage. God has ordained otherwise; and let His will be done. It is enough that He is present in both our dwellings, and that heaven is accessible from both. Be it our concern to meet there. Heaven is the Christian's home, and every other place is exile.

"Affectionately,
"E. NOTT."

These fears of permanent separation were happily disappointed. After a few years, the daughter came back to reside once more under her father's roof, and to remain till her death effected a sadder removal. A letter to his little grandson, his daughter's first-born, written when the boy was nine years old, will fittingly close this domestic chapter, showing, as it does, the lively interest he took in the welfare of this young family, and how earnest, as well as felicitous he was in touching and impressing the mind of childhood. It was addressed to the boy at school.

"MY DEAR CLARKSON: You have just finished the first, and commenced the second stage of life, which is like a journey along a road where there are milestones, set to indicate the distance you have travelled over.

"Sometimes, indeed, the traveller, in other journeys retraces his steps, or goes again along the same road. But the journey of life, though short, is ever onward. The scenes of early childhood to you will never return. You will not again be the infant nursed and guarded, the little boy to amuse yourself with playthings, to be restrained within doors and to do the bidding of others. Mere childhood has gone by, and you have left your home, and your parents, and your grandparents, and though you may return to them, you will never return to be what you were.

"Hitherto you have been taken care of; hereafter you will have to take care of yourself. And how can a little boy be expected to do this? By God's blessing, and not otherwise. The same God is present at Kingsbury who is present at Schenectady. There also shine His sun, and moon, and stars; there, too, is His glory seen, and there may His care be enjoyed.

"You will, therefore, not neglect to read His Word, and supplicate

His blessing every morning and evening. He can preserve your life, and make you wise and good and happy.

"I shall not see how you behave, but God will. He looks on you by night and by day; when you go out, and when you come in. You must strive to please Him and to avoid what He forbids.

"Be careful to obey the rules of the house where you live. See if you cannot secure the affection of the family, and make as little trouble as possible. Do not require to be waited on, wait upon yourself; more than this, be ready and willing to wait upon others.

"Govern your temper. You are now starting anew. See if you cannot get through the term without offending your superiors, or once quarrelling with your equals. You will study diligently. Always observe the rules of the school, and never encourage other boys in disobeying them.

"Show to all with whom you associate that you have been brought up to do right and to speak the truth.

"You will modestly maintain your character as a temperance boy, and make as many other temperance boys as you can. Boys in school are sometimes deceitful, and sometimes profane. You will never imitate the former, or in any way countenance the latter.

"With prayers for your health and welfare, affectionately your grandfather,

"E. NOTT."

CHAPTER XV.

SLAVERY—PEACE-MAKING—REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

Dr. Nott's early hostility to slavery—Expressed in his Baccalaureate Addresses—His concern at the growing power of slavery—His criticism of Dr. Wayland's book—Dr. Nott's predictive sagacity, as related by Dr. Wayland—In favor of the freest discussion—His abhorrence of religious controversy—A peace-maker—Trial of the Rev. Hooper Cumming in 1819, 1820—Dr. Nott's prominent connection with it—His Christian course—His influence in the presbytery—Disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1838—Dr. Nott's view of it, in a letter to Dr. Tucker—Revivals of religion—His views and efforts—Letter of President McLean of Princeton—Reply of Dr. Nott—Revival in 1838—Elder Knapp—Mr. Finney—Revival of 1820—Mr. Nettleton—Dr. Nott's preaching in revivals—Elder Knapp and Father Clarence Walworth.

THE slavery question had for Dr. Nott the widest interest from the beginning of the struggles to which it gave rise. It could not well have been otherwise. With his progressive temperament, his ever warm philanthropy, his ardent patriotism that could bear no stain upon the national honor, it was impossible for him to remain a cold spectator of a conflict involving the deepest interests of humanity, and the very life of our republican institutions. His views, therefore, upon slavery, and especially of American slavery, were early formed, and became as fixed as they were clear. Very decided evidence of this appeared in his Baccalaureate addresses as early as 1811, long before any special agitation on the slavery question had begun, and at a time, too, when Union College abounded in students from the Southern States. The efforts of the English philanthropists, Wilberforce, Clarkson, and others, called from him the warmest tributes of admiration, and he was fond of exhibiting their noble traits of character to his classes on public collegiate occasions.

The feeling grew stronger as the hold of slavery itself seemed to strengthen with the country's growth. He viewed with deep concern the increasing favor which the anomalous institution was receiving at the hands of those most interested in its continuance, and deplored the sophisms by which they attempted to defend it. He was impatient of any argument put forth in its vindication, regarding it as an abuse of reason, as well as of the Bible so often quoted in its defence. He could not bear the faintest apology for it, or anything, even in the writings of its sincere opponents, that had the least appearance of giving a handle to any of the fallacies by which it was commonly supported. He would not allow his nearest friend to publish anything having a tendency, as he thought, to give it even indirect encouragement, without expressing his dissent in the most unmistakable terms. It is in this spirit that he criticises certain views that had been held, or rather, certain incautious terms that had been employed, by a distinguished man who had been one of his own best beloved pupils. Thus he speaks, in a letter to Dr. Tucker of April 9, 1838:

"I have seen our friend Wayland's book. It is the only one of his I should have cared to see before it was published. It has, in my judgment, a great deal of truth, and some sophistry. To a great extent I agree with him. The ground he has taken, I also have taken; and yet, so it is, that his mode of presenting certain truths will, I should think, help the very cause he would wish to weaken. I have heard only one person speak of it, and he regarded it as not only an argument in favor of slavery, but as even having a tendency to encourage intemperance. With that last criticism, however, I cannot agree. There is, doubtless, much truth in what Wayland has said. And yet the manner of saying it, especially at this time, may lead many to view it as having been written in defence of slavery, and as actually weakening the influence of some of the best friends of temperance. We may be certain that such could not have been his intention. As to slavery, I am sure that he formerly abhorred it, and still abhors it. Though I am told that he has changed his position, and that, having prepared a chapter in his 'Political Economy' he cancelled it before publication, and thereafter added a chapter on slavery as it stands in this last work; still I cannot believe that he has gone over to the enemy. I ought to say, however, that my reading of the book has been too hurried to warrant any other than a cursory opinion. It is an age of speculation as well as of action, but truth will receive benefit by discussion. It must be so with the questions of temperance and liberty. Let us then judge him most favorably. Sure I am that my friend Wayland will desert neither of those noble movements. As to myself, I have too much to do to allow me to prepare matter for the press, and there are many who have more time for careful review. What I can do I am obliged to do in a hurry; and off-hand publications are not wanted, or if there was a demand for them, there is, in both those departments, no lack of such supply."

Though Dr. Nott thus freely criticised the views held, at this time, by his former pupil, he had the satisfaction, ere long, of commending him warmly for standing on the true ground, and giving all his influence in behalf of union against those who so ruthlessly sought to destroy it. On this question, so soon to become the absorbing as well as the critical one in the life of the nation, teacher and pupil were in entire harmony. How clearly Dr. Nott foresaw, at an early day, the true character of that question and of the issues sure to grow out of it, appears from a circumstance related by Dr. Wayland himself as published in his "Memoirs."

"An incident which I have had occasion to remember will, perhaps, illustrate the singular foresight of Dr. Nott. Many years ago I chanced to be in New York. It was about the time of the disturbance which grew out of the abolition meetings that had been held in the city. Similar meetings were held, with similar results, in Boston and Philadelphia. I passed through Schenectady shortly after, and of course spent as much time as I could with my old friend and instructor. These meetings naturally became the subject of conversation. I remarked with regret that they had been disturbed, and insisted on the right of free discussion on every subject, but, at the same time added, that the course of the abolitionists was such, their language so abusive, their proceedings so calculated to inflame the public mind, that it was scarcely possible, with any mere police force, to protect them. It will be remembered that their course was such, on principle, as to inflame the passions of men, and that they declared that they could arouse the public mind in no other way. Dr. Nott paused, and after a little while said, in substance, 'Wayland, remember what I tell you. I may not live to see it, but you probably will. This is one of those questions that can never die. This agitation will spread from city to city, until it involves the whole country, and becomes the leading political question of the day.' Both he and I have lived to see the fulfilment of the prophecy."

Sure that the agitation must go on, Dr. Nott had no sympathy with those who sought to prevent, or allay it by suppression. He regarded the right of discussion as sacred; he would not hear with patience of its being interfered with; he discussed these matters with the utmost freedom in his class room, and accorded a similar liberty to others, on all fitting occasions. He wished his students to hear all debates on moral and political questions, even though some of them might be sharply controverted ones, and for this purpose he even furnished facilities to the young men under his care. Gerrit Smith, after becoming a pronounced anti-slavery man, was invited by the president himself to lecture on the theme, which was anything but a popular one at the time, and the "boys" were privileged if not encouraged to hear him. Even George Thompson, the English anti-slavery orator, whose presence and speech in certain localities ever created a storm, was encouraged to come to Schenectady, and his radical utterances were received with loud applause by large audiences, among whom were crowds of students from the college; Dr. Nott himself being present and entering into the spirit of the occasion as heartily as his pupils. He loved free speech. He loved to hear a capable man bring out without fear the strong thought that was in him. One who had really something to say on any topic that concerned human welfare, and could say it manfully and well, was sure of an appreciative auditor in Dr. Nott, who was never wearied of inculcating upon his pupils that it was the worst kind of cowardice to be afraid to hear the truth, by whomsoever presented.

He had no fondness for mere controversy; and religious controversy especially—except as called forth by some urgent occasion, some demand that amounted, in his judgment, to a necessity—was his abhorrence. Where a great principle, involving the cause of Christian truth and human welfare, was at stake, he was ready to enter the arena, and wrestle with others for what he regarded as the right. But even in this case, he was a fair and manly antagonist, incapable of resorting to under-hand, insidious arts or devices in order to gain an advantage. In a warfare of this kind, he regarded sharp personalities as not only indecorous and unwarrantable, but as being weapons sure to hurt the persons using them more than those at whom they were launched. The controversies between rival sects, holding in common the cardinal truths of Christianity, and divided upon unessential points, he considered as not only being utterly futile in reaching the end aimed at, but as positively harmful to religion. The temper often displayed in these denominational encounters he condemned, as being anything but the spirit of "the Master," and the effects of its display as inflicting sore wounds upon the cause so indiscreetly advocated. His own method with persons dissenting from him, and whom he wished to win to his opinions, was wholly different. If a cause had not vitality enough to stand by the frank and earnest enforcement of its true merits, and without violent tirades or denunciation of those opposed to it, then let it die. Such was his doctrine, and his practice strictly conformed to it.

In the Albany Presbytery, of which he became a member in 1798, his connection with it continuing till his death, questions occasionally arose which elicited sharp debate. It was his custom to take part in the discussions, and it was ever an influential part. This was due to the perfect Christian propriety which marked his speech, to the kindliness and fraternal tone which enforced his sagacious views and counsels. His relations with his ministerial brethren were of the most cordial kind. Not a few of them were on terms of close intimacy with him. They confided in him without reserve. They sought his counsel in perplexing affairs of their own, which required the aid of a true and wise friend's advice. He was an ardent lover of peace in Christian societies, ever seeking to restore peace wherever, in any instance, discord and divisions had unhappily sprung up. His services in this direction were, from time to time, called into requisition, and rarely without success. Sometimes troublesome church questions demanded the notice and action of the presbytery, questions involving individual reputation, exciting the feelings of the members, threatening to disturb their harmony and sow serious dissensions. In such cases Dr. Nott was sure to act as a pacificator. His sage counsels, his suave and dignified manner, his calmness and self-possession amid excitements in others, with his earnest, impressive appeals, rarely failed to arrest the storm, or calm its turbulence if it had chanced to break forth.

One of these cases was the trial of the Rev. Hooper Cumming, by the presbytery, in the spring of 1817; a *cause célèbre* among ecclesiastical trials in that day. It involved two others, that of Rev. John Chester, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Albany, and the case of Mark Tucker, a licentiate under the care of the presbytery. Mr. Chester and Mr. Tucker were arraigned and tried on the charge of uttering slanderous words against Mr. Cumming himself being their accuser. After several preliminary meetings of presbytery, the three trials were set down for the month of April, those of Messrs. Chester and Tucker taking precedence; the trial of the former beginning on the 8th, that of the latter on the 10th of April. These being concluded, the presbytery adjourned till the 22d of April, when the case of Mr. Cumming himself was opened. He was, at the time, the pastor elect of the Third Presbyterian

Church of Albany. The congregation was waiting anxiously for his installation, a committee from the church being present at the meeting appointed for Mr. Cumming's trial, and urging that the proceedings might be set aside, so that the pastor of their choice might be installed without delay. This rendered the case still more delicate and difficult, as the high-wrought feeling of many interested parties might communicate itself to members of the court, and affect the calm impartiality necessary to reach a just decision. Dr. Nott was moderator of the several meetings at which these remarkable trials took place. It was fortunate that the helm, at such a juncture, was committed to his hands. He had the self-poise, the clear, quick perception, the sound judgment, the courteous dignity, with the fairness and love of right which, while guaranteeing to the accused every advantage justly due him, secured also the interests of the truth against sacrifice or harm. The result of this trial was somewhat peculiar. While the other gentlemen were unanimously acquitted, the accusations against them proving to be wholly powerless in affixing any stain upon them, the charges against Mr. Cumming could not be set aside. It appeared, however, to the court that the evidence showed the fact of mental unsoundness, and that, therefore, he was not to be regarded as wholly responsible. He had, moreover, formally withdrawn from the presbytery, pending his trial, refusing longer to recognize its jurisdiction. The action taken, in view of the whole case is embraced in the following ecclesiastical utterance :

> "Resolved, That this presbytery do not view the Rev. Hooper Cumming as a fit subject for discipline.
>
> "Resolved, That the further prosecution of the libel now pending be dispensed with.
>
> "Resolved, That the request of the Third Church, Albany, for Mr. Cumming's installation, be not granted.
>
> "Resolved, That this presbytery do not view themselves as responsible for any of the acts of the Rev. Hooper Cumming, either public or private."

The first three resolutions passed at once, almost without remark, and while the last was under consideration a paper was presented to presbytery by the Third Church, and read as follows:

"The commissioners from the Third Presbyterian Church in the city of Albany instruct the elder from that church to state to presbytery, in case the Rev. Hooper Cumming be not immediately installed, that the said congregation and its pastor request a regular dismission from the said presbytery.

"By unanimous order of the commissioners.

(Signed) "JOHN McMILLAN, *Chairman*,
"HOOPER CUMMING."

On this application the request of the church to be dismissed was immediately granted. Mr. Cumming's request was also disposed of by the following action:

Resolved, That the Rev. Hooper Cumming, against whom certain charges have been preferred, but who, as this presbytery have probable ground to believe, labors under a partial derangement of mind, and has, for that reason, been adjudged an unfit subject of discipline, be permitted at his own request to withdraw from all further connection with this presbytery; but that it is not in the power of this presbytery to pronounce him in regular standing, or to hold themselves, in any wise, responsible for his future acts, either public or private."

This was followed by a resolution

"to erase his name from the roll of the presbytery in whose connection, and under whose sanction, he no longer exercises his ministry."

At a meeting of Presbytery, held at Charlton, August 19, 1817, a petition was presented to the body, by the Third Church of Albany, lately dismissed, and by Mr. Cumming, whose name had been erased from the roll of the presbytery, for the dismission of the latter as in good standing. This petition was referred to a committee, who, in a short time reported reciting the reasons for refusing to grant the request.

The report declared that the presbytery having no further official connection with Mr. Cumming, could pass no official act concerning him. This was adopted, and at once followed by a protest from Mr. Cumming against the action taken, and a notice of appeal to be carried to the Synod of Albany. The protest and declaration of appeal were, by resolution, directed to be put upon the minutes; not as a right, but as an act of indulgence and courtesy to those who asked it.

It was through Dr. Nott that the paper received this respectful attention; for the resolution, when first offered, was promptly and decidedly voted down. At his instance a reconsideration took place, and through his influence, the vote in its favor was soon made unanimous. An incident like this reveals as well his liberal Christian spirit, as the weight of his influence in ecclesiastical bodies. Indeed, his whole action in this painful case showed the kindness, and the large-souled charity, of a man incapable of doing a conscious injury to his fellow-man, and who yearned to do him good so far as possible. An appeal was afterward taken to the synod by Mr. Cumming, and Dr. Nott was appointed to defend the presbytery before this higher body. Its action was sustained, and the whole complicated and, in many of its features, most painful case, was set at rest.

The difficulties in the Presbyterian Church, which resulted in disruption in 1838, gave Dr. Nott the deepest anxiety. Knowing the church well through all its extent, and being intimate with most of its prominent men, several of whom became recognized leaders in the discussions and significant movements which heralded the great separation, his interest in the conflict and its issue could not but be of the liveliest kind. For a long time he hoped that the body would live through the threatening agitations, and that the breaches made in its peace would be healed. He had hopes, too, that his own influence in favor of peace and unity might not prove wholly vain, and that a catastrophe so disastrous as the rending of this historic church might be averted. He did what he could to keep the body intact—saw prominent parties in the contest, who were occupying antagonistic positions, and, in behalf of unity, exhausted all those arts of persuasion which he knew so well how to use, and had so often found efficacious. The disease, however, was too deep-seated, and the long-threatened dissolution at length took place. It remained only to acquiesce in the inevitable, and to hope for great good to come out of the new marshalling of the hosts, once so compact, and whose increased strength and efficiency seemed, not long before, hardly compatible with the division of the ranks. His hopes for the best are shown in a letter, in which he thus expresses himself in respect to the changed situation :

"UNION COLLEGE, July 16, 1838.

"DEAR SIR: Your letter, written some time since, has at length reached me by the western mail. Probably it was sent by private conveyance, as no Providence postmark is on it. . . . When or whether I shall ever be able to come to Providence, I know not; but if I ever shall be, you may tell —— that I will take a full revenge on him for all that he has said in derogation of the temperance society. However, I shall not finally decide, till I receive his letter, which has not yet come to hand, and which, when it does come, will, I doubt not, prove very acceptable.

"As to our ecclesiastical affairs, the less that is said the better. The separation has taken place. I trust there are good men on both sides. I am inclined to think that there are not many perfect ones on either side; and, when the low state of religion on all sides is considered, the fact that the parties could not live together in peace ceases to surprise. If either had possessed more of the spirit of their common Master, a separation need not, and would not have taken place. But as matters stood, confidence having been lost, and party spirit having become predominant, I thought it best that the parting should be consummated. That there were some errors and irregularities, I doubt not. Fraternal rebuke, or Christian discipline, would have corrected them. The great body was sound; of course the great majority of both sections will be so; and, I trust, more good will be done by each than would have been done had they remained together. The idea of separation was very painful to me, and the more so as I believe the chief cause lay in our want of the primitive spirit of

Christianity, much more than our want of primitive orthodoxy. Indeed, it would seem that while there are many for Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, there are few for Christ, and *Christ only*, irrespective of the sectarian banner under which they choose to be ranged.

"As to the legal question in relation to which you speak, I have heard nothing said since the last commencement. If that course should be taken, I can only regret that circumstances should have removed me so far away from many with whom I have so long and so often associated.

"We have had a very extensive and delightful revival of religion in town and college, nothing like it for many years. Hundreds will be added to the several churches, while many of the most unpromising among the students have been the subjects of the work, and, appear remarkably well. It has been a great blessing to the college and to many parents who have sons here. Why the work should have been so extensive among the worst young men in college, is known only to Him who has the hearts of men in His hands. "It is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes.

"Yours truly,

"E. NOTT."

While he thus assented to the disruption, regarding the reasons sufficient to warrant if not necessitate it, his relations with both sections continued to be as frank and as cordial as they had been before that event took place. Had he lived to witness the reunion of the two parted bands, no heart in the Presbyterian host would have thrilled with livelier rapture at a consummation which sent forth a peal of rejoicing on earth to be echoed by the "General Assembly" of the skies.

The revival referred to in the foregoing letter was a memorable one in the history of the college. The letters given below show how important it was felt to be, and more fully describe, its character and effects. The first is a letter of inquiry from Rev. Dr. John Maclean, professor in Princeton College, and afterward its president.

"PRINCETON, June 21, 1838.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: I learned yesterday, and with great pleasure, that the college under your care had been visited with special manifestations of God's grace and mercy, and that a large number of your pupils had been brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. For this manifestation of divine favor to your institution. I would most cordially unite with you in giving thanks to the great Head of the Church, and I am persuaded that it would give you great delight, if similar occasions for thanksgiving and joy should occur in the other colleges of our land. In the hope that a brief narrative of the origin and character of the work, as it exists among the youth of your charge, might be rendered of use to the youth of our institution, I would venture to request of you, if your engagements will permit, the favor to give me some information, as to the number of the students hopefully converted, the character of their religious impressions, and such other particulars as you may deem interesting in themselves and likely to be useful to others.

"We greatly need in our college the presence of the Spirit of God, to quicken the few pious youth we have now, and especially to arrest the attention of the large mass among us, who have no concern about their eternal welfare.

"I feel that I am taking a liberty in making the above request, but I am sure it is one you will pardon, even, if it be not in your power to comply.

"With the greatest respect and esteem, yours, etc.,

"JOHN MACLEAN."

"REV. DR. NOTT."

To this letter Dr. Nott sent the following reply:

"UNION COLLEGE, June 25, 1838.

"DEAR SIR: Your favor has come to hand. It is true that a very interesting state of things exists at present in Union College, and, though just leaving home to attend a meeting of Presbytery, I snatch a moment to say briefly, in answer to your request, that the attention to religion commenced immediately after the observance of the day of fasting and prayer in February last. During the vacation, a protracted meeting was held in the Dutch Church in the city, during which a number of the students who remained at college were hopefully converted. On the 1st of May the students reassembled under circumstances more favorable to the exertion of religious influence than at any other period for a number of years.

"When I left to attend the meeting of the General Assembly, I was aware that there was more seriousness among them than was usual—a circumstance which, as you may recollect to have heard me mention at Philadelphia, made me the more regret to be absent from college. The illness of Professor Potter, as well as sickness in my own family, of which I was informed by letter, caused me to leave the assembly before its sittings were closed. On my return, I found a protracted meeting in progress, which had been commenced in the Baptist Church, and which had been transferred to the Presbyterian, with the consent of the session, as an act of courtesy to the Baptists who requested it, and with a view to accommodate a larger congregation.

"Up to this time the meeting had been, I believe, conducted solely by the Rev. Mr. Knapp, a Baptist minister, who formerly preached in the city of New York. Though it seemed to be generally agreed that Mr. Knapp preached the Gospel with plainness and power, some of his arrangements were considered questionable; and not knowing at the outset to what they might lead, many Christians were in doubt whether to discountenance or favor the meetings. In college, too, the great majority seemed disposed to make light of it. Just at this time Professor Potter, from whom I learned that, in his opinion, Mr. Knapp was a forcible and faithful preacher, took leave of college in a very solemn and affecting address, which was the means of awakening many individuals to a sense of their danger; and the cry began to be heard from different quarters, 'What shall we do to be saved?' Under these circumstances, and inasmuch as the meeting in progress, though held in the Presbyterian Church, was not under the direction of its session, I made up my mind, at once, neither to condemn, nor defend, nor discuss, the question of measures which had been introduced; but avoiding this, as a false issue at such a time, to endeavor to impress on the mind of every one, especially of every student to whom I could gain access, the necessity of personal religion, urging them, in place of debating about *forms*, to give all diligence to make their own calling and election sure. This course, after consultation, was agreed to by the clergy and laity of the city generally, who, availing themselves of the attention which had been excited, endeavored to direct that attention on the part of their friends and neighbors to the securing of the one thing needful. From this time an uncommon seriousness seemed to pervade both the college and the city. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, Methodists, and Baptists met and worshipped together in unity, every evening for several weeks. They still meet together in a morning prayer-meeting, though the public protracted services have closed. What is peculiarly gratifying, the meeting terminated in the same spirit of brotherly love with which it was commenced and continued. Without controversy or strife, the converts separated to receive instruction in the several churches with which they purpose to connect themselves; all of which churches will, I believe, receive additions about in proportion to their respective numbers previous to the commencement of the revival. As to the number of converts in the college, I do not think it safe at this time to speak with confidence. An unusual seriousness has pervaded almost the entire institution. Numbers are rejoicing in hope, and numbers are still anxious. Time alone will show who and how many will endure to the end. From present appearances, a considerable number of candidates for the ministry, at home among the churches, or abroad among the heathen, will be furnished. In college, at least the individuals arrested, and the change wrought in them, have been so contrary to what might have been anticipated, as to furnish no ordinary evidence that "*This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*"

"As no parties have been formed, or controversies commenced, either in town or in college, during this revival, I cannot but hope we shall escape those evils which are sometimes said to have followed such seasons. At present at least, there is every appearance of its issuing in blessing *only*, to the college, the city, and the adjacent country. May it continue to extend, and not only our schools and seminaries of learning, but our towns and hamlets, be visited in succession, till the nation shall become regenerate, and, our whole land filled with the knowledge of God.

"Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me to be, with great esteem,

"Your friend and brother,

"E. NOTT."

"REV. PROFESSOR MACLEAN."

In the progress of this memorable revival, the excellent results of which are here so graphically recounted, Dr. Nott took a prominent part. Though cautious in giving his sanction to extravagant measures, he had the spirit and the discernment to examine all things fairly, and to hold fast the good. He decided this work to be good and genuine, and entered into it heartily. He addressed the students often and pointedly on personal religion; sometimes publicly, sometimes in his study, but ever with a power and effect which few could wield so well. He was a constant attendant on the meetings in the city, his influence indeed having gone far, if not proving decisive, in opening the doors of the conservative Presbyterian Church to a Baptist evangelist; and here, too, his exhortations deepened the wide-spread seriousness. He regarded Elder Knapp as one raised up of God to do a specific work. This man was without culture, ignorant of the use of polished periods, or scholastic refinements, or rhetorical ornament of any kind. His speech was plain bordering at times on coarseness, his statement was clear and precise, his illustrations were copious, singularly apt, and drawn freely from all objects within his reach, even the homeliest. But, with all this, he was fervent, fluent, ready in expedient, strong in Scriptural quotation, with a physical energy capable of withstanding the greatest strain made upon it, with a zeal for the one great object of saving souls, and an earnestness in the presentation of the one great message sent to reach and save them, which increased with the increased demand for their exercise. Immense audiences attended Elder Knapp wherever he went, and many thousands of conversions, far and wide, attested the power of his instrumentality in winning wanderers to the cross. Dr. Nott, as well as hearers of less culture and discernment, was greatly impressed with this power. He used to say that he could select series of passages from Elder Knapp's sermons which, if published, would do no discredit to the ablest preachers of the day. It is certain that in the fruitful labors which this evangelist rendered in Schenectady, he received Dr. Nott's cordial and unreserved coöperation. Nor was the interest he took in revivals, and the support he gave to those whose specific work it was to promote them, spasmodic or exceptional. On principle, he was a constant friend to both, giving all his influence in behalf of the preachers who were specially favored in the work of "persuading men" to turn from sin and, lead a Christian life. Other men, possessed of a similar awakening power, were from time to time invited to Schenectady by President Nott, to engage in evangelical labors. Among these was the notable revivalist of a former day, the Rev. Charles G. Finney, afterward president of Oberlin Seminary, and who has lately died, greatly lamented by all Christians. With more culture than Elder Knapp, more logical force and greater intellectual scope and power, he resembled him in entire consecration to one high object, the conversion of souls, and in the wide and often marvellous successes which attended his abundant labors. Dr. Nott frequently sought to secure the benefit of Mr. Finney's services for the students of the college, but as it seems, without avail. In a note received from Mr. Finney, in May, 1874, he says:

> "As an evangelist, I was repeatedly and earnestly invited to labor with Dr. Nott in his college, and once started to go to him, but was providentially stopped in Auburn where a powerful revival immediately commenced and swept through the whole town, so that I failed to comply with his request."

The manner in which Dr. Nott speaks of men like Elder Knapp, and the earnest desire he ever manifested to turn their labors to the best spiritual account, exhibit, in a most striking manner, his true catholicity as distinguished from a spurious liberalism, or a patronizing graciousness. His own style of preaching was very far from that of the revivalist, technically so called. His religious temperament was very different from this awakening spirit, even in its highest and purest manifestations. It has been elsewhere remarked that, though a New England man, and early instructed in the severer New England theology, "he had nothing Edwardean about him." It might be said, with equal truth, that the Whitfieldian style of address was wholly foreign to him. He differed from all alarming preachers, whether they dwelt upon the awful severity of the divine law, like the great Northampton divine, or on the idea of imminent personal danger, like Asahel Nettleton and Lyman Beecher, or on the unrelenting obligation of immediate duty, like Charles Finney, who for so many years produced such powerful and permanent effects in Western New York, or aroused attention, like Elder Knapp, with his eccentric ways united to the most intense seriousness, or enlisted the feelings like Dr. Thomas McAuley, so distinguished for the ever-fervid glow of his Irish eloquence. And yet with men like these he could ever coöperate, and feel a most hearty sympathy with all that was excellent in their several ways. This was especially shown in a remarkable revival of religion that visited Union College, and the city of Schenectady, with much of the surrounding country, in the year 1820. Its commencement and continuance were due preëminently, to the labors of Mr. Nettleton. Dr. McAuley, who had before exhibited the orderly moral and doctrinal religionism of the old fashioned Scotch Presbyterians, with its conservative methods, was carried away by the excitement of the time, and immediately fell in with the more alarming style of exhortation for which the New England revivalist was distinguished. Even that best of Christians, that most perfect Christian, as we might almost call him, Dr. Andrew Yates, seemed roused to an unwonted fervor of zeal and love. Dr. Nott gave his most hearty concurrence to all these proceedings, but, to all outward appearance, remained the same man as before, preserving the same majestic calm of speech and deportment. Some of the more zealous converts among the students, indulging the spirit which had once led even the sainted Brainerd to speak slightingly of Dr. Stiles and the faculty of Yale College, were inclined to doubt his religious character. He would, indeed, gather the students into his study for prayer and pious converse ; but he did not make to them the same pungently terrific appeals they heard from the others, and hence they were led to place him in a lower grade of apostleship. It was a mistake. While he gave sanction and coöperation to the apparently more fervid labors of his colleagues, his own portion of the work was not less sound, both in doctrine and in spirit, while in its results, to say the least, it was no less permanent and effectual. There is well remembered a series of sermons which he gave, that memorable winter, in the college chapel. They were not headed by the usual alarming texts. After a manner peculiar to himself, a number of discourses were preached from the same Scriptural passage. A most suggestive and elevated thought was chosen as the textual theme, while the whole series was but an expansion, of it in all its applications to the religious life: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and on earth is there nought that I desire beside Thee (or without Thee); flesh and heart (body and soul), they fail, but Thou art the rock of my heart (strength of my heart) and my portion forever." Sabbath after Sabbath, during that season of religious interest, was that sublime text announced in our hearing, and its soul-filling and soul-elevating truth, with all the kindred ideas so richly suggested by it, presented in every way that could make the deepest impression. These discourses, it may be said, lacked the solemn pungency of Mr. Nettleton. They did not fill us with dread, as the revivalist's awful picture of the thunder rolling over Sodom, and the cry of the destroying angel to the elect remnant in their appalled irresolution: "Up—get ye out of this place; look not back; flee to the mountain; away to the city of refuge." They did not affect us like the glowing Hibernian fervor of Dr. McAuley's impassioned intreaties: "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die;" "look to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." It may be said that they failed here; but they were not intended for any such effect, even as they were not designed to give us any mere sentimental representation of the divine love divested of its true strength as connected with the divine justice and severity. But this they did: They furnished solid, growing food for religious thought after the heat of the revival should have passed away, when there should come, as there did come, that time of apparent relapse which "the wicked" had predicted—when the rejoicing converts had been safely gathered in, and troubled souls that found no peace, had either gone back to the ways of the world, or remained still mourning in secret, as some of them did for years thereafter. The fruit of this elevated and most instructive preaching was to survive the necessarily transient excitement. When, on the one side, the alarm had subsided, and, on the other, the rapturous hymns, with their strains of jubilee, had grown fainter, if not wholly mute, these grand thoughts still made music in the soul, still continued to elevate the affections, and give expansion to the seeds of grace that had been sown by those who claimed to be the more fervent and effectual laborers.

Nor was the preaching of Dr. Nott without revival effects of a more direct and outwardly impressive kind. During the winter of 1820, as referred to, the Presbyterian Church in Galway, Saratoga county, was without a pastor. Dr. Nott had been assigned by the presbytery, as a temporary supply. This led him to preach often in that place ; and although his sermons differed in few, if any, respects from the style they ever manifested—impressive, indeed, but seldom terrific or alarming—they were followed by a revival of religion no less solemn and effectual than that which sprung from the labors of Mr. Nettleton in Schenectady and a number of towns in Saratoga. It showed that the divine influence was not confined to any particular mode of preaching, so be it that the preacher, the *præco* or herald, was only solemn and earnest in the delivery of his message. It was a season of "the right hand of the Most High," and every truthful mode of appeal made an impression unknown to other times.

During the later revival in Union College, in 1838, of which Dr. Nott's letter to Dr. Maclean gives account, one of the most marked cases of conversion was that of Clarence Walworth, a son of Chancellor Walworth, and who afterward became a somewhat distinguished priest and preacher in the Roman Catholic Church. He was "brought out' as the term was, under the peculiar preaching of Elder Knapp. A class-mate who was supposed, and who supposed himself, to have been converted with him, afterward fell away, and became, in fact, an infidel, with some disposition, as is usual in such cases, to be also a scoffer. A few years ago he wrote to "Father" Walworth supposing, doubtless, that as a Catholic, he would join with him in his light estimate of Elder Knapp's character and labors. The reply furnishes delightful evidence of the love that ever glows in true Christian souls, however sundered by ecclesiastical bars. The letter of the Catholic priest, in reply, is truly a most delightful and refreshing production, which, in spite of all controversial bitterness, must make every devout Protestant feel more kindly to the old church he represents. Instead of encouraging his infidel and apostate class-mate in his tone of raillery, he rebukes him, speaking not only with kindness but with Christian love, of the labors of Elder Knapp, while expressing his gratitude for the spiritual good, never to be forgotten, which through the efforts of the latter, had come to his own soul.

CHAPTER XVI.

PERSONAL TRAITS.

Portrait of Dr. Nott—His genial spirit—Sympathy with youth and their recreations—Judge Nott's reminiscences—His manner before his classes—Mirthful and impressive—His familiar mode of address—President Wayland's reminiscences—Extracts descriptive of characteristic features—Dr. Nott's indirectness—Dr. Wayland's view—Affectionate tribute of a pupil—Letter to Dr. Tucker—Another letter to same—Letter to Samuel Nott.

THE portrait of Dr. Nott which appears in the front of the volume is from an engraving in 1833 from a painting by Ames several years before. He was at that time 47 years of age, and the picture of him as he then appeared is true and life-like. The later, facing page 231, is from a photograph taken in 1856 when he was 83 years old. Advancing years had set their mark upon him, but his mental power and activity remained unimpaired, his eye was still bright, and his bodily force hardly, if at all abated. The countenance is a striking one, even in its repose—the eye, which was of a grayish color, and capable of great variety of expression, being one of its most marked features. The forehead is high and straight, the nose prominent and aquiline, expressive of decision and energy. The mouth and chin are well formed and symmetrical, indicative as well of kindliness as of firmness. The head is set gracefully upon shoulders broad and sinewy, and appropriate to a stalwart frame, evincing robust physical strength. That frame was nearly six feet high, and was now more rounded and fuller in flesh than it had been a score of years before, though never such as to prove unwieldly or retarding to the easy movement of the body, or a hindrance to pedestrian exercise, of which he was fond. Years passed away before this activity left him, and he was obliged to forego the enjoyment which he found in rambles by streams and in fields and woods. His grandson, Hon. Charles Nott, judge of the Court of Claims in Washington, has given an incident or two of the physical activity of Dr. Nott when past the age of three-score years and ten, and of the heartiness and *abandon* with which he could enter into youthful pastimes. Judge Nott graduated from the college in 1848, and what he relates took place a year or two before, when Dr. Nott was probably not less than seventy-four years old.

> "He always loved," he says, "the companionship of the young, and seemed to yearn for the sports and pleasures of boyhood. I remember him at the age of seventy and upward, running with the ardor and speed of a boy to stop a runaway horse, and how, falling in the attempt, and cutting his hand upon the sharp stones of the college terrace, the wound healed kindly in a few days, as if it had been made in the flesh of a child. About the same time, a party of students found a new place of interest on the Helderberg hills. The discovery chanced to be made at one of the few intervals of comparative leisure for Dr. Nott, and he at once seized upon the opportunity for an excursion, with the interest and eagerness of a college boy. The late Assistant Secretary of State—Hon. F. W. Seward—and myself, then students in the lower classes, were released for the day, and taken with him on this little pic-nic. But no one in the party was so young as my grandfather. He talked, laughed, and jested ; he scrambled up and down difficult places, and came back at night fresh and enthusiastic, and ready to start forth again on the morrow. There surely have been few persons who in childhood were so impressed with the grave responsibilities of age, and who in age had so much of the bouyancy and freshness of youth."

In his intercourse with the students, this quick sympathy with youth, and with the elasticity that belongs to it, was very marked. The stern and freezing aspect of one jealous of authority was not seen, as he took his seat in the class-room. On the contrary he appeared there with a genial and good-humored look, which communicated itself insensibly to the class gathered to hear him. Occasionally he launched a mirthful sally, which set the benches in a roar, in which the preceptor joined at times as heartily as the pupils, appearing then as a boy among the boys. This merriment, however, did not relax the hold of discipline. No young man under its influence grew presuming, or ventured on undue liberties, or lost sight of the deep respect felt for the teacher and his lessons. Perhaps a grave and serious topic would soon follow this boisterous effervescence, and then, it was striking to observe how, as the teacher's countenance grew serious and impressive, and he poured forth his earnest convictions in a stream of fitly chosen and eloquent words, every one present was hushed into silence, and every eye riveted in absorbed attention. He had a way of passing from grave to gay at pleasure, and did it so easily and gracefully that it was at once seen to be nature instead of studied art. His college lectures were such only in name. Nothing could be more simple or more unstudied, in appearance, than his remarks. The rounded periods, the artfully embellished paragraphs, of his elaborate public discourses, were absent from the class-room. And yet in these talks, marked by the utmost simplicity, and seemingly regardless of method, there were sometimes strains of eloquence rarely surpassed elsewhere. President Wayland, from whose reminiscences as published by his sons I have already quoted, may be fitly called upon to finish this account of his venerated teacher, as he appeared in the class-room, and few of his many eminent pupils could do the subject fuller justice.

> "To what I have said of the college influences, there was one important exception. The recitations of Dr. Nott were of the nature of conversational lectures. After a brief examination of the subject matter of the text-book, he occupied the remaining time in animated discussion of ideas connected with the lesson. Sometimes he examined, and either confirmed, refuted, or illustrated the author; sometimes he showed the consequences which flowed from the truth enunciated, and applied it to the various forms of individual, social, and political life. Sometimes he relieved the discussion by appropriate anecdotes. His recitations were a pleasure which no student was

willing to lose. We then began to feel ourselves men, and to form judgments for ourselves, on the events which were taking place around us. I think I do not exaggerate when I say that attendance upon Dr. Nott's course of instruction formed an era in the life of every one of his pupils. And yet I must confess that I derived from it but half the advantage it was designed to convey. I was seventeen years old when I graduated. I think my mind did not develop as soon as boys generally. I was interested; I followed him with avidity; I loved and reverenced him, but I had not learned to generalize, nor was I, from ignorance of the world, able to apply his principles as I should a few years later."

We are tempted to quote from these reminiscences a more extended account of Dr. Nott, as his character, work, and usefulness appeared to his distinguished pupil, when calmly reviewing, at the close of his own life, the scenes through which he had passed, and his associations with men of other days. The description has a graphic interest of its own, and as illustrative of personal traits and characteristics in the one whom the writer, from life-long intimacy, was so well fitted to portray may properly be introduced here:

"I think," says President Wayland, "that the greatest benefit I derived, was from my intercourse with the gentlemen with whom I was associated. Of these the most distinguished was Dr. Nott, at that time in the vigor of his remarkable powers. He was then, as always, very kind to me, and admitted me in many respects to a familiar intimacy. I have known him from that time to the present, as well as persons living at a distance can know each other. I think him decidedly the ablest man whom I have ever known intimately. His mind is, in a remarkable degree, original and self-sustained. Nothing in books seems to him of any value, unless he has thought it through, and tested it by his own power of intellectual analysis. He possesses—what I suppose to be the mark of genius—the power of using his mind for any purpose, and turning it in any direction. He could have made himself distinguished in any department of science. I have known him to write very good poetry. He was, when in his prime, the most eloquent man I ever heard. He had a decided bias toward physical science, and from his own experiments made himself familiar with the most important laws of caloric. The number of patents which he has taken out attests his skill in invention. To him, more than to any other man, are we indebted for the rapid progress in the use of anthracite coal. His ability, as a metaphysician is universally admitted. His knowledge of men, and of the principles of human action, is unrivalled. I suppose that no man ever exerted so great an influence as he in the legislation of New York. With all this, he was the kindest, the most charitable, the most forgiving of men. His conversations on religion had the most splendid range I ever knew, varying from the sublimest conceptions to the tender simplicity of a little child. His executive ability was unsurpassed. He never seemed satisfied unless he was carrying on several kinds of labor, any one of which would have been a full and sufficient task for a single man of ordinary ability. The attachment of his pupils to him has, I think, been equalled only in the case of Dr. Dwight.

"When settled in Albany, his reputation as a preacher was unparalleled. Those who heard his sermon on the death of Hamilton have always declared to me that it was the most eloquent discourse they ever heard. He always wrote his sermons with care, and committed them to memory so perfectly, that he was able to modify and vary the train of thought if he chose, though this, I think, he did not often do. When I once asked him how long it took to commit a sermon to memory, he replied, 'Just as much time as I have. The intermission between the services is enough, but I have committed a sermon by reading it over once.' He frequently spoke of the memory as capable of almost unlimited improvement, and said that he had attended a session of the New York Legislature, when he had been able to report the day's proceedings with more accuracy than they were given by the salaried reporters for the press.

"I do not think that his voice was remarkable either for clearness or for power. His gestures were not numerous, but always significant. He had the appearance of perfect self-possession, and of conscious power over the audience. So far as I can recall his manner after the lapse of many years, the excellency which gave him so much power, was in the tones of his voice. I would almost say, they were so perfect, that a man, who did not understand English would, from his tones alone, have been able to form an idea of the train of thought which he was pursuing. I think his style inferior to his ability. It was frequently involved, the several members of the same sentence sometimes standing at a distance from each other; yet when he *uttered* the sentence, the emphasis, inflections, and tones were so perfect, that every part was distinctly connected with that to which it belonged, and you never failed to *comprehend* his meaning perfectly. A sentence which you would *read* over twice before you received the idea of it, he would so utter that you understood it all perfectly. When to this were joined the tones of emotion, adapted to every range of human feeling, you may conceive what must be the effect. He had a short series of sermons on the resurrection, which I heard when I was a tutor. I remember at the present time the effect of them. Each sermon seemed to the audience about twenty minutes long, though in reality, three-quarters of an hour in delivery. I sat all this time perfectly entranced, chills running over me from nearly the commencement to the close. When he uttered the Amen, the whole audience experienced a sensible relief. The strain of attention was so great, that men hardly breathed, and as soon as it was over, every one took a long inspiration, and felt that he could hardly have endured the effect of concentration much longer. Perhaps we may ascribe part of the effect to my youth, and to my deep veneration for the speaker. I have endeavored to make known the effect of Dr. Nott's speaking on *me.* I can also bear witness to the fact, that those of my friends who, at the time, were in the habit of hearing him, had the same estimation of him as a pulpit orator. I confess no one would receive this impression from his sermons as they are printed. They probably appear stately, ornate, labored, and artificial. But when they were uttered by him, it was as I have stated."

In the book containing the foregoing, a passage is given which Dr. Wayland was wont to say excelled in dramatic power any other to which he ever listened. Dr. Nott was exhibiting the absurdity of supposing that the apostles and early preachers testified falsely in bearing witness to the Lord's resurrection. He supposed them, after the death of Jesus, assembled to frame and carry out the monstrous deception. They consult, they send some of their number to invade the tomb and to remove the body. Presently the messengers deputed on this ghastly errand return to their companions—they bring with them the helpless, stark, bloody corpse—they cast it down before the apostles—exclaiming, in tones of contempt, "There is your Christ." And then the apostles go forth everywhere, bearing witness to His resurrection, proclaiming salvation only through His name, sealing their testimony with their blood, careless of reproach, of danger, ignorant of fear, welcoming death. The effect, as described, was overwhelming; and, powerful as was the appeal to the feelings, the argument was equally convincing to the understanding.

One other extract may be given from these interesting reminiscences of President Wayland. The object in so doing is to show that Dr. Wayland, with his high and well-nigh enthusiastic admiration of his former teacher and warm friend of many years, was not blind to certain apparent defects that marked his character, and did not hesitate to point them out. It is certain that Dr. Nott obtained with many the character of an adroit manager. It was said that he reached his ends, at times, by indirect methods. He was intriguing, insinuating, crafty, it was alleged. Those who had dealings of moment with him had better be upon their guard. The way in which such a statement was made, sometimes as an admitted fact, would seem to show there must have been some ground for it to rest upon. We think the class of detractors referred to formed the opinion in question from a one sided and inadequate apprehension of his real character. All persons most familiar with him unite in their testimony to his truthfulness and honor. Such men as Dr. Wayland, Bishop Potter, and others, knew him to be incapable of compassing an end by unfair dealing or questionable appliances. We believe he was a thoroughly conscientious as well as kindly and benevolent man, ready to do his neighbor good and shrinking from doing any one a conscious injury. But he was discreet, cautious, and wary. He knew men, and how to approach, move, and convince them. His method of doing this was his own. He did not feel bound to admit all men at once to his confidence, to disclose all his plans, and put every one in possession of the precise process by which he purposed to meet his ends. And thus, partly on account of his reserve and reticence, partly on account of his faculty of knowing more of the views of others than they could learn of his, and partly by reason of his quiet and adroit method of winning men to his views, coupled with the successes he was known to have achieved in many a difficult negotiation, there arose in some minds an opinion adverse to his perfect fairness, and which a more intimate knowledge of a character, high-toned, manly, and truth-loving, as his, would have gone far to explode. Dr. Wayland's remarks show something of this while giving the causes and explanations.

> "With all my admiration for Dr. Nott, I think I am not unaware of his errors. As the president of a college, he devoted himself to its material prosperity. Had he sought more to improve its means of instruction, and to teach its teachers, so that these means might be well employed, I think his success would have been greater.
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> "His power of influencing men, led him also into errors. It led him to delight sometimes, to do things indirectly, which might as well be done directly. I speak here of the general estimation which has been formed of him. I never experienced anything of the kind myself. I always treated him with perfect simplicity, and he, so far as I know, entirely reciprocated it. I have thought sometimes that what seemed to others to be double-dealing and policy, was nothing more than a far-seeing sagacity which enabled him to look much farther than other men, and to prepare for events of which they never conceived; and that this sometimes gave rise to the opinion, that he had been laboring to produce, what he only foresaw and provided for. I think that men of eminent sagacity are frequently misjudged in this matter."

These "Reminiscences" of Dr. Wayland, as honorable to the aged pupil as to the still more aged teacher, close with this affectionate tribute.

> "To this remarkable man I owe very much. To no one have I applied so often for counsel, and from no one have I received advice so deeply imbued with Christian principle and far-seeing sagacity. There is no one whose maxims are so often recalled for my direction, and for the government of my conduct. I last saw him at New Haven. He was then over eighty years of age. He had travelled a full day's ride by railroad, and, in good spirits, was spending the evening in a room full of friends, who had called to do him reverence. He preached twice on the following day, with much of his usual vigor, and on Monday, by five o'clock A. M., set off on a journey. His physical health was evidently failing, and his power of original thought was

probably declining; but his judgment was as sound as ever, and his friendly and loving spirit had suffered no abatement.

"These reminiscences seem, I suppose, to savor of the garrulity of old age. It is very possibly so. If it be so I cannot help it, I am writing for my children, of the things which I recollect, and which tended to the formation of my own character. It is pleasing to recall them, trifling as they are, and without relating them, I could not accomplish the purpose which I have in view."

Another pupil of his, who graduated from the college in 1814, one year after Dr. Wayland, and who enjoyed a close intimacy with Dr. Nott, was the Rev. Mark Tucker. He consulted his former teacher with the utmost freedom, on all matters of interest in his professional work, and the aid sought was given as freely as it was asked. On the strength of his intimate relations, he sometimes pointed out certain things in which he regarded Dr. Nott as falling short of meeting the just expectations of the public, or of performing some specific services, which he was fully qualified to render. In a confidential letter, he appears to have intimated that his labors would have been more productive of good, if instead of being frittered away on scientific experiments, they had taken the direction of some book, treating topics of wide and general interest. The views expressed by Dr. Nott in the following reply confirm several of the opinions and statements given in the extracts from Dr. Wayland, besides presenting, in a very engaging light, the modest estimate which Dr. Nott put upon himself and his own services.

"MY DEAR TUCKER: Your favor has come to hand. You speak frankly; and I write a few lines that you may know it is well received. The world will not judge me harder than I do myself, though the things for self-reproach are different. I am aware that I have done little, and it remains for further developments of providence to determine whether I shall not have lived very much in vain. Yet I do not feel that idleness, or neglect of the department in which I have been called to labor, has been a constitutional sin. When I entered on life there was no provision for common schools, and next to none for academies and colleges. To produce a change in public opinion in favor of these institutions, to lay their foundation, required activities of a certain kind; and it has been my steady purpose not to live for the present, but to apply whatever influence I have, so as to secure, as far as possible, remote and permanent results. What the end of my labors will be I leave with God, but I believe the whole process now going forward, for cheapening education, and providing tuition and books for the indigent, will be found on inquiry to have emanated from Union College. Should that institution succeed, it may hereafter furnish the means for the production of treatises that you would have me produce. But the time was not yet; and my duty called me to lay a foundation for others to build on, and not to spend the vigor of my mind on mere literary results connected with my own reputation. After all, I may have misjudged, not because my views have been visionary, but because the designs of providence were otherwise. Be this as it may, the age and the state in which my short part is acting are not the best for authors. That age will be hereafter, and there may be more and better writers produced, and, indirectly, by myself, than if I had spent my life in writing. I do not know that it will be so. God knows, and I wish only to be willing that He should order it as seemeth good to him.

"As to mental labor, I have done too little, I admit, and yet, few of this generation, I believe, have spent more time per day in study than I have done. Nor did anything hinder me till my constitution gave way, and, I was obliged to change in some small degree my habits. Now, the little *incidental* attention that I was obliged to give to something, has been given, not exclusively "to stoves," but to those general principles of heat that have a bearing on most of the processes and comforts of human life.* That any great good will grow out of it, I will not say; and, should there not. it will not, perhaps, be more profitless, than the incidental methods of exercise adopted by other men. Still, even here I have not acted capriciously, and I still hope that my occasional play hours may turn to the account of the human family. I should deem it a happiness, should it yet be in my power to increase the comfort of the rich, and lighten the expenses of the poor, and stimulate the exertions of the industrious. But whether any or all these results follow, I have thus given a turn to my spare hours that suited my own views of propriety better than walking, riding, or other kindred exercises. In how many better ways the money of which you speak might have been spent, I know not, or, whether I have been deficient in the great duty of charity, I will not say, or make any comparison between my own alms and those of others. These are things between myself and God, and, I pray that, whether he give me much or little, he may grant me grace to use, as a trust, whatever he gives. I am always sorry to be the occasion of evil speaking to others. I am not accustomed to say much of myself or my affairs, and this may be a reason why misapprehension should exist. I shall however, I hope, the little time I have to live, so live as to be able to give a reason for my pursuits to those who may feel an interest in them.

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* See Appendix A.

"Yours truly,

"E. NOTT."

In an earlier letter to Dr. Tucker, he speaks of the age as being one of action. He holds that labor in a given sphere, in order to be effective, must be adapted, and thus refers to his own habits in a former field.

"As to your other question, it is impossible to say anything very definitely. It is an old adage, that it is better to wear out than to rust out. This is always true, especially at the present time. We live in an age of action, not of study, and how much of our time is to be given to each it is not easy to determine. When I was in Albany I visited on Monday, studied on Tuesday and Wednesday, commenced my sermons on Thursday, and gave to them the residue of the week. This rule could not be observed in your situation, and we must accommodate ourselves to circumstances. To preach funeral sermons is difficult for the pastor, but useful for the flock. He who does this statedly must extemporize. Zeal supplies the place of study, and usefulness compensates for hardship. We may take all the comfort God gives us, but we must defend every post at which he places us, though it should cost us wearisome days and sleepless nights. There is no rest *this side* of Jordan, unless we take it at the expense of duty; *beyond* it, rest is perpetual. A change of place ordinarily brings only a change of evils. This should make us patient where we are, till God points to a removal. The whole vineyard is the Lord's; we may labor anywhere. To act well our part, there all the honor lies."

A letter full of tender interest was written at a later period to his brother at Franklin, being elicited by one from the latter, recounting the saddening changes which death had made in the circle of his neighbors and friends since Eliphalet had resided in the parish. The swift flight of the years and the changes it was ever producing, suggest religious thought and lessons, as they rarely failed to do, and he points their application at himself as well as others, as unsparingly as though he had been the least provident of men, and had but slightly regarded the value of time.

"——, 1840.

"MY DEAR BROTHER: Your letter of January 30th has been received, and it affords me and my family great pleasure to learn that you returned in safety, and are still in the enjoyment of life and health. I know that you are an old man, and that great and fearful changes have taken place among your people. And yet, it is difficult for me to realize the fact as I knew you and them when I left the place. Both seem so vividly present to my view: you, in the vigor of life, and they in their several grades from youth to age. I cannot realize the change that time and death have been effecting. Should I live again to visit the place of so many former acquaintance and present recollections, I should find myself surrounded by strangers; and the few who ever knew me would marvel at the change in me, as I do at that which has taken place in them.

"How mysterious are the ways of Providence! Why a being of such vast desires and progressive powers should be placed in a world like this, would, but for the Bible, be indeed an enigma. The other orders, whether of beings above or below us, seem suited to their condition; man alone stands out an exception, ever busy, ever eager in pursuit, and never finding anything satisfactory. Still he presses on till death overtakes him, and, however old he may be, his task appears unfinished. Though I am behind you, still I begin to rank with old men, and must soon (I see it), resign an unfinished task. I have been always hurried through life, and yet have brought little to pass.

"It has been my lot, too, to be much occupied with secular affairs. I could not well avoid it; still, the remembrance is painful. I long to return to duties more strictly religious, and I pray God to grant me this privilege, if it be His will.

"It is a great blessing to have health, and to be active in advanced age, as you have been and are. But so little do we know what is best that one hardly dares to pray even for the possession of an earthly good. The Bible unfolds new views of the life that is and that is to be. Eternity is long enough, and Heaven rich enough, to satisfy the desires and hopes of the most aspiring mind. But the lives of Christians are a stumbling block, and none more so than my own. How can beings such as we are be admitted to, or enjoy, though admitted, the Paradise of God. Our imperfections cling to us until death. There can be no change of character afterward. Is there a change in the transition? or, are there, in these degenerate days, few, very few that be saved? Whether the world is advancing towards the millennium, or to some dark, dreary period to precede it, I know not. But I do know the elements of society are in commotion, the organization and ecclesiastical machinery that has been so long in use, is giving way. New agencies and instruments are coming into use—power is changing hands, and a state of things, better or worse, is about to be realized. The result is known only to God. Whether the liberties and Protestant principles of this great republic are to be preserved, is a problem yet to be solved. If there is much to awaken hope, there is much to excite fear; and there is no resting place but in the attributes of the God that determines alike the future and the past. He is able to govern the world, and their interests cannot be neglected who are under His especial care. May He for the sake of His dear Son, pardon and accept of us and ours, and bring us to His heavenly kingdom.

"Give my love to the children and grandchildren. With you, may God keep and bless them.

"Affectionately yours,

"E. NOTT."

CHAPTER XVII.

COLLEGE PRESIDENCY, 1820-1845.

Fruits of a quarter of a century's labors—Large classes graduating—Professor Potter's return to the college—Deep interest taken by the President in young men—Affectionate intercourse with his pupils—Letter to one—Advice to young students proposing to enter the ministry—Recollections of an interview from a pupil's note-book—Interesting views on various subjects—An independent thinker—Impatient of shams—Letter to Dr. Tucker.

LONG before Dr. Nott completed his quarter of a century as its president, Union College had reached a position that assured its success. It had risen above the embarrassments, financial and otherwise, which had checked its growth and threatened its life. It had succeeded in winning the confidence of the public. It had enlarged its course of instruction, with the larger accommodations it was obliged to furnish for growing numbers. It had increased, too, the number and strength of its professorial corps, and had come to rank fairly with the best known and best managed colleges in the land. The character of its president as an administrator of rare ability, as well as an instructor of the highest order, was widely known, and brought students from far and near to reap the benefits of his educational skill. As early as October, 1826, he thus writes to his daughter, Mrs. Potter, then residing in Boston. "Tell Mr. Potter we have entered about ninety students since commencement, that there is a temperance society in college of about one hundred and thirty or forty members, and that we are in a very agreeable state as respects study and good conduct." The tidings of the numbers in the temperance society, taken in connection with the large accession to the college, he knew would specially interest Mr. Potter. From this time till 1845, the year which marked the semi-centennial in the life of the institution, the college enjoyed a high prosperity. Year after year for a score of years, the graduating class numbered over a hundred, without including those who were simply graduates of the scientific course. The number of the undergraduates was proportionally large. Professor Potter came back to the college in 1831, to occupy the chair of rhetoric and natural philosophy. He was an acquisition of which any institution might well be proud. He had already been tried there, and his merit as a teacher was fully known. He was a scholar ripe and good, well versed in polite literature, and standing high as a man of scientific attainments. He was an eloquent speaker, too, had an excellent faculty of communicating, easily and well, the knowledge he had acquired, and as a class-room lecturer he had few equals. He was, moreover, a good disciplinarian, a courteous gentleman, an exemplary Christian man, and devoted to his work as a teacher. His influence was always in the right direction, always strong, and no college ever had a more thoroughly capable, conscientious, and faithful officer. He stood closely by the side of the president, who fully appreciated the worth and services of such a coadjutor, and bore an important part in the general administration of the affairs of the college. Indeed the high prosperity of the institution at the time was due, in no inconsiderable measure, to Professor Potter's earnest work, liberal spirit, and tireless energy. It is certain that his reassuming labor in the college, at this time, greatly strengthened the heart of the veteran who stood at the head of it, and whose abundant labors, made heavier by the increasing weight of years, demanded some such stalwart support. Probably no greater joy could have come to him than to have his beloved daughter, with her family, return to live under his roof, and her husband enrolled in the list of his professional aids.

The deep and affectionate interest which Dr. Nott took in the welfare of the young men under his charge, and in those also who had gone forth to win their way in the world, was frequently exhibited. All who were anxious for advice or counsel, or specific direction in regard to the course it might be best for them to pursue, or the means of pursuing it successfully, he encouraged to call upon him at his study. His paternal care was especially manifested by taking this course with those who needed to be stimulated to greater diligence, or admonished for neglect, or reproved for some delinquency in duty, or guarded against some vicious indulgence which threatened to grow into a depraving and ruinous habit. On these occasions, he was singularly frank, earnest, direct, and persuasive—speaking with the gentle tones that a father would use to a beloved son, and meeting every case according to its precise needs, whether it were calm advice, sober argument, or warning expostulation. He rarely failed to leave an impression that produced good results. Young men would come to him too, under concern for their spiritual welfare, and after receiving from him the gentle counsel and guidance which their anxiety demanded, would be committed in prayer to Him whose grace is infallible to all who earnestly seek it. Letters asking advice would sometimes be sent to him by those who had left the college, and who remembered well—what they had heeded too little when under his direct care—the kindliness, the paternal solicitude, the far-seeing sagacity of their old instructor, whose desire to do them good, they well knew, was not limited by the walls of the college. To these letters he would return such replies, now brief and pithy, now run out into more detail, as the circumstances of the applicants seemed to need. The following is selected as a specimen :

"MY SON: Your favor is at hand. I thank you for the expressions of sympathy which it contains, and for the proffer of future aid which it makes. I doubt not, should that aid be required, that the pledge now given will be redeemed, and I shall be greatly disappointed if you do not render effective aid to any cause to which you shall lend your talents.

"You will in the end be a politician. But, if you aim at high standing as such, establish first a high professional character. Let the State seek your aid, instead of your seeking its patronage. Here as elsewhere, that which soon comes to maturity soon decays. Honors befit old age, but old age is apt to be desolate and dissatisfied, when honors enjoyed in early life have passed away. The pleasures of the gay and giddy assembly make men frivolous—fondness for the wine-cup often kills. From neither of these, I believe, are you in danger—and, though you have not as yet, I think, abjured tobacco, I trust you will wholly give up the indulgence before your health shall have suffered irreparable injury. I am told you are skirmishing with the enemy; better form the high resolve to carry the stronghold by assault. Above all things, remember that God's blessing alone can make life a blessing and crown your efforts with success.

"Ever yours truly,

"E. NOTT."

Another letter of advice was written in answer to an application by one of his pupils who was about to enter upon the ministerial work, and who wrote in behalf of several others similarly situated. It is full of wisdom given in sententious brevity.

"MY SON: In your letter to Mrs. Nott you intimate a wish that I should give some advice to the class of theological students now about to enter on professional duties as ministers of the Gospel. I can say nothing specially, as your special circumstances are unknown to me. The best manual, of a general kind, you will find in the letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus. I can only add that were I to live over my life again, I should strive to live nearer to God, and to be more wholly devoted to my work.

"Health is indispensable to usefulness, and should be studied so far as temperance, purity, and well-regulated habits of cleanliness and exercise are concerned. As for the rest, as far as official duties go, it is 'better to wear out than to rust out.'

"In the early part of my ministry I occasionally dined out with gentlemen of wealth; in the latter part of it, never. I visited the rich of my congregation little, the poor more, the sick and afflicted most. He who bases his standing in his congregation on the friendship of a few rich families stands insecurely. He who makes a lodgment in the affections of the masses, has a firm foundation. The poor are not only the special care of the Saviour, they are the minister's most reliable friends.

"It is better to be useful than to be popular. It is a bad thing for a clergyman to have too little reputation; worse to have too much. If a man acquires a great reputation, it will be difficult to sustain it, and he will be under constant temptation to labor to preserve his standing, rather than to save the souls committed to his charge.

"The ministry is a noble profession, and rich in interest to the the man who loves it. To him who does not, it is a life of drudgery. It is not lucrative, but reputable, and free from the hazards and conflicts to which other professions are exposed. For the present life it is meagre in rewards, but has great remuneration in prospect of eternity. Clergymen, who need *more,* usually have less common sense than the members of other professions. They often know much of books and little of men.

"As the chief object of the clergyman is not money, the less he says about pay the better. If you want to be well supported, give your soul to the work of your ministry, and God will provide for you and yours. Those ministers are usually best paid, who think little, and say less, upon the subject.

"Those who put a whole body of divinity into one sermon always preach pretty much the same thing. Those who confine themselves to the illustration and application of a single point, will always present something new. As to whether sermons should be written or read, I would only say, that either method, well executed, will be tolerated; still, he who speaks extempore (untrammelled by manuscript) speaks with the greater effect.

"A settlement in the country, as a general rule, is best for a young man; generally it is best for life. If a young minister settles in the city, he must kill himself by study, or sink into obscurity. The duties of a clergyman are too onerous to be borne by any man who has not the fruits of labor laid up in store.

"As a general rule a minister's visits should be religious. Mere social calls are worth little. Religious calls often tell on the conscience, and where they do not, there will be no complaint because they are not more frequent. Let parties alone; let religious controversy alone; let heresy alone. Preach the pure Gospel, continue to preach it; it will be your best defence against error.

"If you speak at all of others, dwell on the points in which you agree and not on those in which you differ. Never dispute with Baptists about the mode of Baptism, nor wtih Episcopalians about church government. The one has more water, and the other more form than you have, and will, therefore, always gain by debate. The Presbyterian minister's arm of power is evangelical truth, and one revival of religion will do more for him against formalists and heretics, than years of controversial labor. In one word, do all the good you can by preaching Christ crucified, and by prayer, and leave the rest to God."

"Very truly yours,
"E. NOTT."

He was frequently visited by his former pupils. Long after their graduation they would call upon him to show their kindly regard, express their gratitude for the benefits his instructions had conferred, and enjoy his sprightly and suggestive conversation. One of these, a graduate of the class of 1815, who seems to have found much favor with the President, and to have been successful in drawing him out, had a long talk with him in 1834 on various topics, and jotted down the notes of it soon after, in the form of question and answer, with a sort of Boswellian particularity. Some points in these recollections, for the substantial accuracy of which the writer vouches, are subjoined as illustrating the independence of Dr. Nott's opinions, the shrewdness of his observation, and his original way of looking at things. The anecdotes are interesting, and in some of the views presented, many of his pupils will recognize the familiar ring of criticism which dropped from his lips in the class-room.

In answer to a question Dr. Nott said: "I have been thirty years at the head of Union College. I am the oldest college President in the United States, though not the oldest man in the office. I cannot drop down anywhere in the Union but I presently meet some of my children." The questioner remarked on the large number of graduates who had died, nearly half of his own class being already dead. Dr. Nott replied, "That is a large number to die so soon. I think it a little remarkable that there have been so few deaths among the members of college, since I have been connected with it. I can distinctly recollect the individuals who have died at college, and during thirty years there have been but seven. The proportion must be less than one-third of one per cent. Very many, however, have died soon after leaving college. Two or three, in almost every class, have died within a year after they have graduated. I have been at a loss as to the cause of this marked difference, I can assign no other than the sudden change which then takes place in the student's habits of living, diet, and whole course of life."

"How do students generally answer the expectations they have raised during the college course?"

Dr. Nott.—"I have been rarely disappointed. I have found my little anticipatory notes generally fulfilled. I recollect, however, one class which graduated four or five years ago, in regard to which I have been very happily disappointed. There were more sceptics in it, and it had given me more trouble than any class we have ever had. But now every one of those misbelievers, with one exception, is a minister or is studying for the ministry." In answer to the question what course he took with a sceptical student, Dr. Nott said, "I remember a very interesting case I had several years ago. There was a young man in college, of fine talents, an excellent and exemplary student, but reputed to be an atheist. He roomed near me. I was interested in him, but I feared his influence in college. This was injurious, and yet he did nothing that openly called for censure. I invited him, one day, to my study, and questioned him kindly and familiarly in relation to his speculative views. He said he was not an atheist, but had very serious doubts and difficulties on the subject of revelation, and frankly stated them to me. I did not talk with him *religiously*, not thinking he would bear it. I told him that I felt a peculiar sympathy with young men in his state of mind; for, once during the French revolution I had been troubled with kindred difficulties myself. I had been over that whole ground, and would gladly assist his inquiries and direct him to such authors as I thought would aid him in his inquiries after truth. As he left my study, I said, 'Now ——, I expect yet to see you a minister of the Gospel.' He returned to his room and paced it with emotion, saying to his room-mate (who communicated the facts to me within a year), 'What do you think? Dr. Nott says he expects me to be a minister. I, a minister indeed!' and he still walked the room and repeated the words. No immediate effect on his character was produced. But the prophetic words, as he seemed to regard them, could not he put away, or their impression blunted, and he is now a Christian man and student of divinity."

Certain ministers were referred to who condemned the reading of Shakespeare's Plays, as demoralizing and in other respects injurious. Dr. Nott's opinion being asked as to the propriety of this, he thus expressed himself:

"As to that matter, I always say to my young men 'Gentlemen, if you wish to get a knowledge of the world, and of human nature, read the Bible. The Bible is the first and best book that can be studied for the exhibition of human character; and the man who goes out into the world expecting to find men just such as Moses and Paul have represented them will never be disappointed. If you are contented to read nothing but your Bible—well—you have it all there. But if you will read any other books, read Homer and Shakespeare. They come nearer, in my estimation, to Moses and Paul in their delineation of human character than any other authors I am acquainted with. I would have every young man read Shakespeare, I have always allowed my children to read him.

"Ministers, as a class, know less practically of human nature than any other class of men. As I belong to the fraternity, I can say this without prejudice. Men are reserved in the presence of a respectable clergyman. I might live in Schenectady and discharge all my appropriate duties from year to year, and never hear an oath, nor see a man drunk. And, if some one should ask me, 'What sort of a people have you in Schenectady? Are they moral—do they swear— do they get drunk'? For aught that I had seen, or heard, I might answer, 'This is after all a very decent world. There is very little vice in it. People have entirely left off the sin of profaneness, and as to intemperance, there is very little of that.' But I can put on my old greatcoat, and a slouched hat, and, in five minutes place myself amid scenes of blasphemy and vice and misery, which I never could have believed to exist if I had not seen them. So a man may walk along Broadway, and think to himself, 'What a fine place this is! How civil the people are! What a decent and orderly and virtuous city New York is!' while at the same time, within thirty rods of him, are scenes of pollution and crime, such as none but an eye-witness can adequately conceive. I would have a minister see the world for himself. It is rotten to the core. Ministers ordinarily see only the brighter side. Almost everybody treats them with civility, the religious with especial care and attention. Hence they are apt to think too well of the world. Lawyers, on the other hand, think too ill of it. They see only, or for the most part, its worst side. They are brought in contact with dishonesty and villany in their worst developments. I have observed, in doing business with lawyers, that they are exceedingly hawk-eyed and jealous of everybody. The omission of a word or letter in a will, they will scan with the closest scrutiny, and, while I could see no use for any but the most concise and simple terms to express the wishes of the testator, a lawyer would be satisfied with nothing but the most precise and formal instruments, stuffed full of his legal caveats and technicalities."

Being asked, which, in his opinion, excelled in eloquence, the pulpit or the bar; the reply was, "The bar. I ascribe its superiority," Dr. Nott said, "to the superior influence of things of sight to those of faith. The nearness of objects enhances their importance. The subjects on which lawyers speak come home to men's business and bosoms. Some present, immediate object is to be gained. The lawyer feels this and his aim is to accomplish this present thing at once. But ministers plunge into the metaphysics of religion, and go about to inculcate the peculiarities of a system, and not deeply feeling, themselves, are not able to make others feel. It has long been a most interesting question to me, Why is the ministry so indifferent? It has seemed to me, that with the thousands of pulpits in this country as a theatre to act in, and the eye and ear of the whole community thus opened to us, we might overturn the world. Some ascribe the want of efficiency to human depravity. That is not the sole cause. The clergy want knowledge of human nature. They want directness of appeal. They want the same downright common sense way of interesting men which lawyers have."

"Ought they not to cultivate elocution more?"

Dr. Nott.—"It seems to me that at those institutions where they pay the most attention to elocution, they speak the worst. I have no faith in artificial eloquence. Teach men to think and feel, and when they have anything to the purpose to say, they can say it effectively."

"How do you account for the power of some tragedians?"

Dr. Nott.—"The speaking of the theatre is not, and is not intended to be, true to nature. Its object is to amuse, not to convince, not to prompt to action. It approaches near enough to nature not to caricature it, and departs far enough from it to make the audience understand that the scene is not real but fictitious. Those actors, if called to address men on some real and momentous occasion, would utterly fail to touch their hearts, while some plain countryman, who had never learned a rule of art, would find his way at once to the fountain of feeling and action. The secret of the influence produced by the acting of the theatre is not that it is natural. Let a real tragedy be acted, and let men believe that the scene passing before them is real, and the theatre would be deserted. No audience could bear the presentation and acting of a real tragedy. People go to the theatre to be artificially excited. The scenery, the music, the attitudes, the gesticulation, all unite to fix attention, and awaken this false interest. But the eloquence (so called), of the theatre is all factitious, and is no more adapted to the real occasions of life than would be the recitative in singing, and it pleases on the same principle that this does.

"Ministers have often a sanctimonious tone which by many is deemed a symbol of goodness. I would not say it is a symbol of hypocrisy, as many very pious men have it. One man acquires a tone, and those who study with him, learn to associate it with his piety, and come to esteem it an essential part of ministerial qualification. But instead of being to me an evidence of feeling, it evinces a want of it in every degree, and, whenever a man rises in his religious feeling sufficiently high, he will break away from the shackles of his perverse habit, and speak in the tones of nature. The most eloquent preacher I ever heard was Doctor Linn.

"General Hamilton at the bar was unrivalled. I heard his great effort in the case, 'The People versus Croswell,' for a libel upon Jefferson. There was a curious changing of sides in the position of the advocates. Spencer, the attorney-general, who had long been climbing the ladder of democracy, managed the cause for the people, and Hamilton, regarded as an old school Federalist, appeared as the champion of a free press. Of course it afforded the better opportunity of witnessing the professional skill, and rhetorical power of the respective advocates. Spencer, in the course of his plea, had occasion to refer to certain decisions of Lord Mansfield, and embraced the opportunity of introducing a splendid *ad captandum* eulogium of his lordship—a man, he said, born for immortality, whose sun of fame would never set, but hold its course in the heavens, when the humble names of himself and his antagonist would have sunk beneath the waves of oblivion.

"Hamilton was evidently nettled at this invidious and unnecessary comparison, and meditated giving, in due time, a fitting retort. His argument in reply was a tissue of clear, powerful, and triumphant reasoning. He turned every position his opponent took, and dismantled every fortification. His peroration was incomparably fine. As he pictured the evils and horrors consequent upon a muzzled press, there was not a dry eye in the court-house. It was the most perfect triumph of eloquence over the passions of men I ever witnessed. When he had thus brought his speech to its proper, and what would have been its perfect close, he suddenly changed his tone, and in a strain of consummate and powerful irony began to rally his antagonist. He assented to the gentleman's eulogy on Lord Mansfield. It was deserved. He acknowledged the justice of his remarks in relation to himself (Hamilton) and his ephemeral fame. But he did not see why the gentleman should have included himself (Spencer) in the same oblivious sentence. His course in the race of fame had hitherto been as successful, for aught he knew, as was even his Lordship's; his strides had been as long and as rapid. His disposition, too, to run the race, had been as eager, and he knew no reason why he might not yet soar on stronger pinions and reach as lofty a height as his lordship had done. During the whole of this passage the audience were in a titter, and Hamilton sat down amid a burst of uncontrollable laughter. Said Spencer to him frowningly (I sat by the side of the judges on the bench and both Spencer and Hamilton were within arm's length of me), 'What do you mean, sir?' 'Oh, nothing, sir,' said Hamilton with an arch smile, 'nothing but a mere compliment.' 'Very well, sir, I desire no more such compliments.'"

"What was the difference between the oratory of Hamilton and Burr?"

Dr. Nott.—"Burr, above all men I ever knew, possessed the most consummate tact in evading and covering up the arguments of his opponent. His great art consisted in throwing dust in the eyes of the jury, and in making them believe that there was neither pertinence, nor force, nor reason, in the arguments of the opposite counsel. He never fairly met a position, nor answered argument, but threw around them the mist of sophistry, and thus weakened their force. He was the prince of plausibilities. He was always on the right side (in his own opinion) and always perfectly confident.

"Hamilton, on the other hand, allowed to the arguments of his opponent all the weight that could fairly be claimed for them. and attacked and demolished them with the club of Hercules. He would never engage in a cause unless he believed he was on the side of justice, and he often threw into the scale of his client, the whole weight of his personal character and opinion. His opponents frequently complained of the undue influence he thus exerted upon the court."

The question of religious controversy was introduced, and Dr. Nott expressed himself thus:

"I am disgusted and grieved with the religious controversies of the day. The divisions of old school and new school, and the polemical zeal and fury with which the contest is urged, are entirely foreign to the true spirit of Christianity.

"The Christianity, much of it at least, of this age, is in my view most unamiable. It has not the lovely features which distinguished the primitive church. If Christianity, as it now exists, should be propagated over the world, and thus the millennium be introduced, we should need two or three more millenniums before the world would be fit to live in. Look at the style of our religious perodicals. If I had suddenly dropped down here, and wished to get some distinct view of the religious and moral state of the community, I would call for the papers and magazines. And, when I had glanced through them, I should pronounce that community to be in a bad moral and religious state, which could tolerate such periodicals. A bad paper cannot live in a good community. I have been especially grieved and offended with the recent Catholic controversy. I abhor much in the Catholic religion, but nevertheless I would not affirm that there was no religion in that church. I do not like the condemnation of men in classes, by wholesale. I would not, in controversy with the Catholics, render railing for railing. They cannot be put down so; they must be charmed down by kindness and love. Much of the religious controversy is like a gladiatorial contest, the object of it, I fear, being not so much truth as victory.

"But Luther, it is said, was a hard fighter, and with this kind of weapon. I know it; but he was this, in some sort, from necessity, being engaged in a life and death struggle, a champion of the truth struggling to free itself from error. Still, I have but little sympathy with that trait in his character. The world owes more perhaps to Martin Luther than to any other man who has lived since the days of the apostles. And as God makes the wrath of man to praise him, and restrains the remainder of wrath, so He raised up Luther, an instrument adapted to his age, and to the circumstances of the times. But Luther's character was, in some of its features, harsh, rugged, and unlovely; and in these, it appears to me, it was not founded on the Gospel. Compare him with St. Paul. Once they were placed in circumstances almost identically the same. Luther's friends were endeavoring to dissuade him from going to Worms, on account of apprehended danger. Luther said, 'If there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses, I would go.' When Paul's friends at Cesarea wept and besought him not to go up to Jerusalem, knowing the things which should befall him there, 'What mean ye,' said he, 'to weep and to break my heart, for I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem, for the name of Jesus.' Many a bold, reckless man of the world could have said what Luther said—none but a Christian could have uttered the words of Paul. It may be said that constitutional differences in the men made the difference in their mode of speaking and acting. Peter was a different man from Paul, as Luther was from Melanchthon. Luther's ruggedness would be apt to show itself everywhere. The harsh traits in his character were no part of his Christianity. They existed, not in consequence of, but in spite of his religion."

Some of the foregoing views may startle a little by their boldness, and all of them may not receive an unhesitating assent, but they show an independent mind, which was not content to rest passively in the beaten track of other men's opinions, but struck out, relying on itself, into new paths. This was indeed a marked feature in Dr. Nott's character. He was fond of thinking out a subject, looking at it on all sides from different points of view, subjecting it to a severe analysis, comparing it with other views, and then stating frankly and plainly, but calmly and unobtrusively, the result which he had reached through these processes. He had no scruple in tearing from shams, pretence, and error, the disguises by which superficial people were deluded into confounding show with substance. He did not parade his opinions for the purpose of startling by their boldness or novelty; nor did he shrink from uttering them for fear of shocking or offending those who were contentedly walking in the ways of their fathers.

As showing his common-sense way of looking at things, and how it colored the advice he was often called upon to give, the following letter to a clerical friend is introduced:

"DEAR SIR:

Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,
Those call it pleasure; and contentment these.

"The poet was no mean philosopher; nor would the soundness of his remark be materially affected, though in the couplet, *duty* were substituted for bliss. As there are periods of action and of study in individual existence, so there are in national. Which are most beneficial in the great plan of Providence, it is not for me to say. There is always a luxury in thinking, but the press of business at our stage of life is such, that there is little time to think. He who serves God to any considerable purpose *now*, must serve him by action. And an individual may think himself well off, who has only two or three times as much to do as he can do.

"During the present generation, we can have few erudite men. Not that we want talents, but that we want leisure. And yet amid such an assemblage of ecclesiastics, there must be a demand for some thinking men. The question, however, comes back to each individual, what *his* duty is, whether he ought to *think* or act, *study* or labor.

"Some men cannot think, some cannot act, some can do either. Again, the *condition* of some men impels thought, of others, action. But the majority, or at least very many, may give a character to that condition, or may exchange it for one in which either of these attributes may respectively predominate.

"You must change *yourself*, however, before you can have any powerful motive to change your state of life, and the one will be a nearer, perhaps a sufficient reason, for the other. Happiness is relative. It results not from *condition*, but from the adaptation of condition to the prevailing constitution and temper of the incumbents. Your labors are not so great, nor your external comforts so few, as were those of Saul of Tarsus. Yet the life of Saul was as rich in enjoyment as in action. Still, there are men, and good men, who could not have enjoyed such a life. The easy affluence of Mæcenas had its pleasures, but the restless mind of Cæsar could not have relished them. Religion sanctifies, but it changes not the characteristic difference of men. Jonathan Edwards had no time to visit his flock, but much to devote to God and to mankind, in his study. Other men, of whom the press has preserved no memorial on the earth, may have gained by the living voice as many souls to heaven. Every post of duty is a post of honor, and every path of duty leads to glory.

"If, by a change of habits or of inclinations you find yourself fitting for a different theatre of action, I do not suppose it sinful to seek that theatre, or to enter on it when it may present itself unsought. But without such inward preparation, you cannot be a gainer by a change merely of outward circumstances. It is not necessary that a man should be in his study to grow wise. The process of thought may be carried forward on a journey, and insight into men and things may be gained by the wayside.

"As to system, a man may have too much as well as too little, especially in theology. A country minister may follow to advantage the movements of Providence, and avail himself of events as they arise, to give enforcement to the revealed word. I do not think that a man can be censured for following an Epistle through, in a series of sermons; it will probably produce a salutary effect on his mind. At any rate, it will save him the trouble of selection. But if something is gained by such a procedure, something is also lost. There is a unity in an Epistle as it is written, and as it was heard by a primitive church at a single meeting. But when it is parcelled out in a series of weekly texts, stretching through a year' you can hardly conceive of a method of address deviating so much from the manner of an apostle. Paul's letters had an object, and were addressed on some particular occasion. A single passage may be used in like manner, but not a continuous address running on from year to year through every text in an entire Epistle. After all, do as your judgment dictates. One man shoots best flying; another must rest his piece and take deliberate aim. It takes all sorts of men to make a world, and almost as many sorts to make a ministry. The best are those that are richest in the love of God and the knowledge of the Scriptures.

"With great esteem, yours, etc.,

"E. NOTT.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESSES.

Baccalaureate Addresses—Extracts—"Sensitive nature of man"—"Conduct in dealing with adversaries—Individual influence, etc.—Phi Beta Kappa oration of 1824. Productions of scientific achievement—Inhabitability of the worlds—Chemical discovery—Criticism on Dr. Nott's youthful style—The youthfulness of his character, as manifested in old age—The interest he took in commencement exercises—Their value as exhibitions of the youthful ideal—Popular lectures.

IN common with the presidents of most of our colleges, it was the custom of Dr. Nott to pronounce at commencement, a formal address to the graduating class. The occasion was invested with special interest of a grave and affecting character. It appealed strongly to young and susceptible hearts that for a course of years had been associated in the common pursuits of a common literary home, and to whom the parting time had come. Under the sobering and mellowing influence of such an hour, there was offered to the teacher a rare opportunity for reaching and impressing minds that, at other times, were little prone to hear the voice of wisdom. The value of this opportunity no man understood better than Dr. Nott, as certainly few men were so happily endowed with the faculty of improving it. Even on ordinary occasions, his personal magnetism was strongly felt. But now, when the speaker, always earnest, spoke to them for the last time, and labored to give to his parting counsel its utmost weight, we can imagine what the solemnity of the discourse must be, and the effect it would be likely to produce. His yearly addresses of this character form an instructive series. Some of them have been printed, and therefore, there is the less need of giving specimens of them here. Taking them as a whole, one is struck with the variety of the topics treated, with their liberality of view, their deep practical interest, their clearness of statement, their richness of illustration, their earnest tone, their catholic spirit, their warm piety, their close, pungent application. To all this must be added, what cannot now be so well appreciated, their most impressive delivery. They could not have been heard without deep emotion, or secret resolves to lead a manly life devoted to truth and duty. Some extracts from these addresses may be expected by readers, at least, who have had no previous acquaintance with them. They will be taken almost at random. Man is a creature of sense as well as of intellect. In one place this distinction and the diversity of duty arising from it are thus presented.

"I know that there are men, and good men, too, who calumniate indiscriminately the pleasures of sense. I say calumniate, for the language they utter is neither that of reason nor revelation. The finger of God is too manifest in the sensitive part of our nature to admit a doubt concerning the innocence of those enjoyments which spring from it. Christianity, instead of reprobating, bids us receive them with gratitude, and indulge in them to the glory of God who so wisely and so benevolently created us for rational happiness.

"But though the pleasures of sense constitute a part, and an innocent part, it is but a very humble part of human felicity. Restrained within the limits, and conformed, in all respects, to the decorum of gospel morality, they are wisely and graciously permitted to us. If this decorum be violated, if these limits be transgressed, order is subverted, and with it, guilt, as well as misery, inevitably ensues.

"On this article nature herself coincides with religion, fixing at the same point her sacred and impassable boundary. She has stamped on the very frame of man her *veto* against excess. Not merely the palling apathy, but the languor, the pain, the disgust that follow it, are her awful and monitory voice, saying distinctly to the devotee of pleasure, 'Rash mortal, forbear—thou wast formed for temperance, for charity; these be the law of thy nature. Hitherto thou mayest come, but no farther; and here must all thy appetites be stayed.'

"Attend to the voice of nature—obey her mandate. Consider, even in the heat of youthful blood, consider thy frame, 'how fearfully, how wonderfully made,' how delicate its texture, how various, how complicated, how frail its organs; how capable of affording thee an exquisite and abiding happiness, and, at the same time, how liable, by one rash act of intemperate indulgence, to be utterly deranged and destroyed forever.

"And let me forwarn you that the region of innocent indulgence and guilty pleasure border closely on each other, a single step only separates them. If you do not regulate your pleasures by principles fixed and settled; if you do not keep in your eye a boundary that you will *never* pass; if you do not impose previous restraints, but leave your hearts to direct you amid the glee of convivial mirth and the blandishments of youthful pleasure, it requires no prophetic eye to foresee that, impelled by the gusts of passion 'conscience will swing from its moorings,' and that your probity, your virtue, your innocence, will be irretrievably shipwrecked."

In the same address occurs a suggestive and striking passage relating to the proper conduct to be observed toward those holding adverse opinions, whether political or religious. The directions are eminently practical, and are such as if carefully observed, would greatly moderate, if not wholly abate, the unseemly asperities which often disfigure religious, not less than secular controversies.

"Diversity of sentiment is inevitable in a state of things like the present. The dispensation of time is full of obscurity, and, till the light of eternity shall break upon the mind, it is not to be expected that erring mortals will see eye to eye. While groping in this world, and following the guidance of that erring reason which is scarcely sufficient to direct us, even in things pertaining to this life, it must be folly to suppose ourselves always in the right, and more than folly to reprobate those whom we consider in the wrong.

"Society, on which you are about to enter, is already divided into various sects in religion, and agitated by contending parties in politics. To judge correctly, you must take a comprehensive survey of the whole field of controversy; and, having honestly formed your judgment, give full credit to the merit of those who differ from you. Sparing your censures, even when you conceive them to be due. . . If there can be anything that utterly disgraces civilized society, it is a spirit of indiscriminate and wanton slander. And yet this spirit exists. It exists among us. It pervades the whole extent of a country once proudly preëminent for every social virtue. It insinuates itself into the cottage of the poor; it enters, I had almost said *resides*—in the mansion of the great. It is cherished by every party, it moves in every circle. It hovers round the sacred altar of mercy; it approaches the awful seat of justice. It surrounds us on every side, breathing forth its pestilential vapor, blasting the promise of genius and virtue, or, like the grave, whose pestiferous influence it imitates, reducing the great and the good, the ignoble and the vile, to the same humiliating level. Permit me to indulge the hope, young gentlemen, that you will never enlist under the banner of this foe to human happiness, nor prostitute your talents, or even lend your names, to this work of intellectual massacre. . . . Whatever party you may join, or in whatever rivalships you may engage, let your warfare be that of honorable policy, and not the odious contest which succeeds only by blackening private character. Convinced of the sacredness of reputation, never permit yourselves to sport with the virtues, or even lightly attack the vices of men in power. If they pass a certain boundary, indeed, sufferance would be pusillanimity, and silence treason. But the public good, and not private interest or private resentment, must fix that boundary. Homage is due to the sanctity of office, whoever fills it—a homage which every man owes and which every good man will feel himself bound to pay, afer the sublime example of Him who, though a Jew and residing at Jerusalem, rendered honor and paid tribute to Cæsar at Rome."

In a passage setting forth the comparative value of reason and revelation as guides to men, and the practical results of choosing the one or the other for the journey which all must equally travel, the matter is presented in the light of this sharp and impressive contrast:

"In whatever light the claims of these two systems which offer you their guidance are viewed, the odds appear immense. Reason, grounded on nothing higher than the dimly observed facts of nature and matter, tells the parent of a family that his children are no bettrer than other productions of the animal world, and that he is not even bound to rear them. Revelation tells him that they are heaven-descended, and that he must train them up to glory. Reason, thus limited in its view, tells the child that gray hairs are a reproach, that filial gratitude is not a virtue, and that he is at liberty to abandon his aged parent. Revelation tells him to reverence the hoary head, to honor those to whom he is indebted for his being. The stoical reason, knowing no other ground of submission, tells the sufferer that his pains are imaginary; that if not imaginary they are irremediable, and must therefore be borne in hopeless and sullen silence. Revelation tells him that they are parental chastisements, enduring but for a moment, and that they shall work out for him a far more exceeding and external weight of glory. Reason, bounded by sense, tells the mourner that his tears are as absurd as they are useless, for the grave is a place of oblivion, and the dead have perished forever. Revelation tells him that they are invisible only, not extinct, and repeats beside the urn that contains their ashes, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality.' . . . On the verge of the grave, the affrighted soul asks what is the nature of death? and the grave, what are its dimensions? Reason, the treacherous guide, answers, 'Both are unknown; that darkness no eye penetrates, that profound no line measures. It is conjectured to be the entrance to eternal sleep, the precipice down which existence rolls into everlasting oblivion. Beyond that gulf which has swallowed up the dead and is swallowing up the living, neither foresight nor calculation reaches. What follows is unknowable; ask not concerning it. Thus far philosophy has guided you, but without a guide and blindfold you must take the last decisive leap, perchance to hell, perchance to non-existence.' How the scene brightens when revelation is appealed to! As the ark of the testimony is opened, a voice is heard to say, 'I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live again.' It is the angel of the covenant. His bow of promise is seen arching the sky, and reaching down even to the sepulchre, whose dark caverns by its radiance are illuminated. Behind these mists of Hades so impenetrable to the eye of reason, eternal mansions rise in prospect. Already the agony of death is passed. To the redeemed sinner there is but one pang more. Shouting victory he endures that pang, and while he is enduring it, the last cloud vanishes from the firmament and the heavens become bright and serene forever."

In enforcing the important lessons he felt called upon to give the young men who were so soon to leave him, Dr. Nott did not hesitate to point out the shortcomings of persons belonging to his own order. He did not cover up the faults of clergymen. In his classes were many young men who had the Christian ministry in view, and the remarks which follow were addressed, as will be seen, specifically to them.

"Particularly, should any of you enter the sacred ministry, let me press upon you these considerations. Never do haughty egotism captious animadversion, and acrimonious rebuke appear so unsightly as in the minister charged from the meek and lowly Jesus with an embassy of peace. And yet alas! unsightly as these appear, with regret and sorrow are we sometimes compelled to behold them. A particular profession or pursuit does not alter the nature of the human passions, but only gives to them a different direction. The wrath of Saul was as deadly as that of Herod. The one assassinated out of complaisance to a giddy girl, the other persecuted for conscience' sake. This circumstance, however, made no difference to the wretched victims whom his malignant zeal pursued to death. . .

"The proud, ambitious, arrogant clergyman takes his stand in the church with the same views that the proud, arrogant, ambitious statesman takes his position in the world. Is self-aggrandizement the motive of the latter? so is it of the former. And this is to be sought in pursuits and studies which ought, above all others, to sweeten the temper and humble the pride of man. But where grace does not interfere, these studies and pursuits do not alter human nature. The arch casuist soon, indeed, acquires a zeal for religion, but it is cruel; he learns to contend for the faith, but he contends with acrimony; and even the *cross*, the sacred symbol of his Saviour's sufferings, is borne about with him as an ostentatious emblem of his own humility, His own creed is the standard of doctrine, his own church is the exclusive asylum of faith. He fancies that he possesses, *solus in solo*, all the orthodoxy, all the erudition, all the taste of the kingdom. Swaggering like Jupiter on the top of Olympus, he seats himself as sole umpire in all matters of faith, of fact, of science. If any one dare to pass the boundary he has fixed, or to adopt a mode of expression he has not authorized, he brands him with the appellation of *heretic*, and instantly hurls his thunderbolt at his devoted head.

"You may imagine that there is no occasion for cautioning those entering the sacred ministry against such a temper in themselves, or to instruct them how to meet it in others. But if you so imagine, it is because you know little of yourself or of others. There is among Christians, and even among Christian ministers (alas! that it should be so), a rebuke that blasts and a zeal that consumes. Do you not remember who they were that preferred the sanguinary request, even to Jesus Christ in person, whether they should not command fire to come down from heaven, and consume a whole village of Samaritans, because they had treated them less urbanely than they expected. And do you not also remember the mild, the heavenly, and yet pointed rebuke he gave them—rejecting their proposal, and disclaiming the spirit which prompted it? Do you not remember the anathemas which have been uttered, and the gibbets which have been erected by ecclesiastical authority? Ah! had the spirit of the world never pervaded the sacerdotal order, the saints would not so often have been compelled to famish in dungeons or wander in exile."

The duty of being actively engaged, and of earnest, persevering exertion is well exhibited in the subjoined paragraph setting forth the incalculable effect of *individual* influence.

"Again I ask, whether entering on such a theatre under such circumstances—a theatre where there is so much good to be accomplished, and so much glory to be won—whether the mere negative praise of living harmless and inoffensive is all to which you aspire? Are you willing, after all the pains which have been taken with you, after all the treasures which have been expended on you, after all the prayers that have been offered up for you—are you willing to become, not to say injurious, but useless to society? . . . willing to perish from that earth in which you received your being, without having wiped away a tear, without having mitigated a sorrow, without having imparted a pulse of joy, or left one monument on earth, or sent one messenger to heaven, to testify that you have not lived *in vain?* Can the buoyant, the bold, the daring spirit of youth be satisfied with the prospects of such a destiny?

"But what can a youthful adventurer, a mere *individual,* hope to accomplish for the benefit of the world? Let me answer: All the fame that has been acquired, all the infamy that has been merited, all the plans of happiness or misery that have been formed, all the enterprises of loyalty or of treason that have been executed, owed their existence to the wisdom or folly, to the courage or temerity of *individuals* once mere youthful adventurers as you are. Each of you possesses a capacity for doing either good or evil which human foresight cannot measure nor human power limit. Your immediate exertions may benefit or injure some; your example may reach others. These carry on the charm of communication. Its links extend to an indefinite remoteness. And thus it is that impulses commenced by you may have no termination while time endures."

In 1824, Dr. Nott delivered the annual oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Union College. It was, in the main, a sketch of the progress in science and the arts which the times then exhibited, as compared with former ages. It is ornate, glowing, exuberant—sometimes approaching what unfriendly criticism might style tumid—yet never losing the warmth and heartiness which are its redeeming characteristics. It contains many predictions. The speaker is especially carried away in the prospect that opens before him of the achievements the age was soon to witness from the developments of science. Especial wonders were expected from the increased knowledge and applications of electricity. Some might regard it as almost a prophecy of the electric telegraph. But prediction is an easier thing than discovery, and although it might be said that the science of Dr. Nott's day contained, in embryo, all the ideas on which the invention of Morse was founded, still is the latter entitled to none the less credit on that account. It is all the greater, in fact, from his bringing into practical use known facts whose appreciation had been before so strangely overlooked. The discourse enlarges also on the rapid advance then lately made in chemistry by Sir Humphry Davy and others. After this it turns to the field of astronomy, at that time rendered most attractive by the brilliant mathematical aid it had received from La Place's "Mechanique Celeste." The orator next indulges in a glow of rapture on the prospects opened by the idea of the inhabitability of the planets; but it is made fresh and striking by a wonderful richness of imagination in carrying out the thought. It was one in respect to which, at that time, little doubt was entertained, although later discoveries are making more and more probable the conclusion, that a large part, perhaps the greater part, of the planetary bodies known to us are, as yet, but gaseous or liquid wastes, as far as any idea of life, especially of human life, is concerned. Still it must be said that Dr. Nott's speculations here are truly magnificent, while his treatment of the subject exhibits some of the highest forms of eloquence. He is very sanguine. Discovery will go on until the worlds are put in communication, and mutual signallings are made from every part of God's kingdom. For it is God's kingdom that the rapt speaker ever has in view. Its greater sun is "the sun of righteousness," and all its worlds are but manifestations of the divine creative, administrative, and redemptive glory. It would have been like a cloud passing over this sun had the thought occurred that there was coming a time when a certain form of physical science, disdaining all other illumination, should reveal, at every step, a mystery greater than it solves, causing the darkness to grow faster than the light, and driving farther and farther off the solution of the great question, the only question that has a real interest for us, Why does nature herself exist ? or, "what is it all about ?" The time may come when this cloud shall be dispersed; there are signs that such an era is already approaching, and then Dr. Nott's splendid vision may begin to receive its full realization.

In the extracts given there is an exuberance in the style, as we have said, that exposes it to criticism. It has an appearance of youthfulness, as some have been disposed to characterize it, as though Dr. Nott, even in his old age, had been affected by his constant contact with young men, and his necessary familiarity with their literary efforts. There is some truth in the criticism ; but it is not to be confined to his style. As has been elsewhere remarked, in his thinking, too, he seems to have reversed the usual order. Men generally become more rigid, fixed, and conservative as they grow older. Dr. Nott, in some respects, became more radical, more inclined to open his mind to the examination of every new idea that claimed acceptance. Not merely in regard to temperance and freedom did he manifest this progressive spirit. When far advanced in years, he became warmly intrusted in mesmerism, biology, spiritualism, and kindred ideas, though here the shrewd sagacity of his strong common sense ever proved a check to the seemingly opposite temperament. He purchased and carefully read all books that were published on these topics, while he manifested no hesitation in recommending their perusal to others, old and young. He did love to think with young men, but it was not so much from contact, as from a freshness or juvenility of thought and feeling that he never lost. One consequence of this was that he ever maintained a lively interest in college commencements. Bishop Potter of New York, in his late address, has alluded to his dignified appearance on such occasions. His three-cornered hat, and his Latin formulas, however worn they may both have become, never lost their impressiveness. He was himself, moreover, always interested in these youthful exercises. Fifty-six years, it might be thought, would have rendered them wholly matters of wearisome and unimpressive formality. But it was never so. At the commencement of 1861, or the fifty-eighth of his sixty-two years presidency, he entered into the spirit of the occasion as fully, perhaps, as in 1804, the first year in which a class had graduated in his presence. He showed himself in hearty sympathy with the speakers and their orations. As the efforts of very young men, these productions were, doubtless, for the most part, very declamatory, or sophomorical, to use a common term, but that with him never diminished his interest. He listened to them with a more fixed attention than he would have given to the Phi Beta Kappa oration, or to the learned jurist or theologian who addressed, on such occasions, the collegiate literary societies. It was because he received from these juvenile efforts deeper lessons of truth and human nature than could be derived from the more elaborate productions. This young oratory gave the student's ideal, his view of life, what it ought to be, and what he would make it. In one sense, it was most truthful; in other respects, most didactic as well as suggestive. What fine fellows they would be if they were only as good as their commencement orations! How hopeful the life that should be modelled according to the ideas presented in even the poorest among them! How heroic, how high-toned, how honorable, how unselfish, would they be—what patriots and philanthropists, what martyr missionaries, what devoted lovers of truth and righteousness, in every form, would they show themselves, if they lived in conformity with the principles so manfully enunciated on that proud day when they stepped upon the stage that was to separate them from the college and introduce them to the world. To the president, these exercises of the graduating boys formed a favorite subject of conversation with visitors who attended reception parties given at his house on the evening of commencement day. It gave a zest to his hearty mode of congratulating the young speakers themselves. They were to him not mere sophomorical trifles, evanescent and worthless. "Take good care, my son, of your commencement oration;" such was the spirit of what he thought and said. "Preserve it carefully. Years hence, the time-stained paper may be both strength and counsel, awakening the youthful ideal in the selfish noon of life, or diffusing its young warmth and light amid the clouding shadows of age." "Much have I learned," said Rabbi Chanini, "of my teachers; but more than all from my disciples." Dr. Nott did not derive the idea from the Talmud, nor would he have expressed it in so large a way; but the feeling out of which it arose was familiar to him. "I love to learn of one who formerly sat at my feet as my own pupil." Such was his language in reply to a graduate who had expressed his gratitude for early instruction by dedicating to him a book. There was a similar feeling in respect to undergraduates. He took pleasure in confessing how much he himself had learned in those familiar conversations of the class-room before referred to, such as the freedom of criticism in which he indulged on Kames, and to which he so freely invited his pupils. In these informal exercises, the answers of the students not only gave him some new view of human nature (a subject he was always studying, whether as exhibited in the young or in the old) but rich suggested ideas to add to his own stores—original thoughts legitimately *conceived*, and genuinely *born*, to use a favorite figure of Socrates, and to which the elder teacher had only contributed *in the occasion* he furnished for their happy delivery. It would be absurd to attempt a Plutarchian parallel between Dr. Nott and the Athenian sage. There were few points of resemblance in the active American educator of the nineteenth century as compared with the quizzing street preacher of Athens, whose delight it was to gather the boys around him while he plucked the feathers from the conceited sophist, or lecturer, or probed the political demagogue, or exposed the hollowness of some advocate of the idealess sense-philosophy. In one feature, however, the likeness was as clear as it was tender and impressive. They were both great lovers of the young. This peculiarity in Socrates is mentioned with approbation by some of the best writers of antiquity, though the political accuser made it the occasion of charging him as a corrupter of the youthful morals, while to later scoffers, such as Lucian, it became the ground of an accusation still more opprobious, as it was so utterly false. The manifestation of a similar beauty of character in the modern exemplar of the same trait caused some censorious minds to impute to him, as has been already noticed, an excess of juvenility, especially in his style of writing and oratory. In defiance of such a sentiment, may we say that in both alike it was a noble exhibition of their intellectual and moral temperament. The love of the young retains for its possessor the best qualities of youth, while it detracts from none that form the highest excellency of riper years. It shows the absence of that cold, contracted, and contracting selfishness which Horace has so well described, when he represents the old man as

> Res omnes timide gelideque ministrans;
> Dilator, spe longus, iners, avidusque futuri;
> Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti,
> Se puero, castigator, censorque minorum. *

" One who does all things with cold and cautious timidity; one who puts off (the evil day); slow in giving up the hope (of longer life); sluggish in action, yet greedy of the time still left; troublesome, or hard to please; complaining; a

To this his love for the young, and their reciprocally cherished remembrance of him, the annual commencement gatherings of Union College, now becoming more numerous than ever, bear warmest testimony. It was especially manifested in 1865, when Dr. Nott was in his ninety-third year, and the long array of classes passed before his mansion. As Judge Campbell so pathetically tells us in his letter, page 49, "the lamp of life had burned to the socket." Its flame was feeble and flickering. He had to be supported at the open window as rank after rank filed before him with uncovered heads. He could not speak to them, but, though pain was stamped upon the countenance, the smile and glow of feeling were still there, deeply affecting the young, while drawing tears from aged eyes in that memorable procession.

On other than collegiate literary occasions, Dr. Nott manifested peculiar gifts as an eloquent and attractive lecturer. At such times he had always high purposes in view. He had little or nothing of what has become common with the professional lecturing haranguer. It was his aim to bring forward truths, great and important in their nature, yet ever practical. The influence which his public addresses ever had in elevating the tone of thought and morals, was wide and powerful. Apart from the good fruits which his baccalaureate discourses are known to have produced, he gave frequent lectures to promiscuous audiences, on various moral questions in which the public mind was deeply interested. His lectures on slavery have been referred to, and few among the earlier foes to human bondage, aided more decidedly in creating that public sentiment of abhorrence to the system, or that irrepressible feeling out of which emancipation ulti-

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praiser of the times that are gone—when *he* was a boy ; a severe chider and reprover of the young."—*Ars Poetica*, 71.

So said Aristotle before him. The censorious echo has been repeated by satirists in every age. Its tone is truthful in the main, though sometimes suggestive of rare exceptions, as in the case before us. All who were most familiar with Dr. Nott in his old age—in extreme old age—must testify to his being, in every respect, the very reverse of the picture which the Roman satirist has so skilfully drawn.

mately grew. As a temperance lecturer his services were in great demand far and near. His earnest and efficient appeals, early begun and long continued, rank him deservedly with the foremost of those who have done most by voice and pen to rescue men from a most destructive vice. Two lectures, the one on "The Apparent Discrepancy between Nature and Revelation," and the other entitled "The Coincidence between Nature and Revelation," containing suggestive and vigorous exhibitions of the subjects respectively treated, were listened to with interest and profit by various audiences. Two other lectures on the "Dignity of Labor," in which the subject is treated with remarkable clearness, fulness, and force, were received with such favor that he was called upon to repeat them in most of the principal towns of the State. In estimating, therefore, the influence of Dr. Nott as an educator, his work as a popular lecturer must be taken into account. And when there are considered, the frequency with which, during the most active period of his long life, he appeared before large and attentive audiences, the practical character of the subjects discussed, and his rare power of enforcing their grave lessons, it will be readily seen how salutary must have been the effect produced by this class of his labors upon the well-being of society. Most truly, in this way did he set an example to his students, and render most intensely practical the precepts he was ever theoretically inculcating upon them, of so acting, so speaking and writing, that "the world might be all the better for their having lived in it."

CHAPTER XIX.

LETTERS ON THE DEATH OF FRIENDS — ON THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY.

Death of his early friends—Sympathy with persons bereaved—Letter to his brother—To Mrs. Nott—To Mrs. Potter—Death of his daughter, Mrs. Potter—Character of his beloved child portrayed—Letter to Dr. Tucker—Advice to him in his theological difficulties—The Unitarian controversy—Question of exchanging pulpits—His mild yet firm theology.

DR. NOTT ever felt keenly the loss of kindred and friends by death. Instead of being blunted by age, his sensibilities grew more and more tender, as the beloved circle grew narrower, and the friends of other days were gathered, one by one, into the silent mansion appointed for all. His sympathies were deeply moved by the sorrows of those especially bereaved, and while his own heart keenly felt the blow that removed from him "lover and friend," his childlike trust in the wisdom and goodness of the Great Disposer ever gave a tone of hopefulness to his words of consolation.

The cheerful temper of his own religion, and the unfaltering faith which he reposed in the divine Friend and Redeemer, made him a valued comforter to the afflicted. The following letter has an interest from its being addressed to the brother to whom he was indebted for his education, and with whom he always maintained the most intimate relations until the time of Samuel's decease at the great age of ninety-nine. It was written on the death of his brother's wife after a union of half a century.

"MY DEAR BROTHER: Yours, with its melancholy intelligence, has been received. It was intelligence which I had long expected. But, however expected, death when it comes brings along with it ever the same solemn interest. You are much older than myself, and yet most of my own nearer acquaintance have gone to the land of spirits. My family have been remarkable for exemption from death, and yet I have tasted its bitterness, and can sympathize with those that suffer.

"If this life were all of man, how diminutive would its span appear!

"But it is eternity that gives to time its fearful consequence. These little interests, these every-day concerns, are linked with an eternal destiny. To die is full of terror, but to go to judgment and give an account of the deeds done in the body—it is this that gives to death its peculiar awfulness.

"What, without religion, is there to cheer the prospects of age? To travel down the hill of life, to see our faculties failing, our friends dying, our hold breaking from the world—to have before us the prospect of soon returning to the dust and of being forgotten; how saddening! But the Gospel that sheds light upon the sepulchre, that reveals in God a reconciled Father, that speaks peace to the sinner, that provides holiness for the guilty, and eternal life for the dying, has in it all that is necessary to give consolation in trouble. Oh, if we could enter into the realities of the religion we profess; if we could see the hand of God in all things, and feel the right that he has in us, and over us and ours, we should rejoice even in the darkest hours. 'The Judge of all the earth will do right,' and his attributes are a sufficient security for the protection of all that put their trust in him. The death of friends is painful; but the separation from these who die in the Lord will be momentary. If faithful to our Master we shall soon reassemble in the Father's house, and unite in worship around His throne. Eternity is big with consequence, and who can look forward to the judgment day without trembling? If it were not for the death of Christ, I should despair. But since God has given his Son to die for us, shall he not with him freely give us all things? Sinners as we are, we may safely believe His promises, and rely upon His mercy. Though *we* too must die; he can prepare us for that hour, and sustain us in that crisis. Oh, that in anticipation, we could serve him better and love him more, and that every void left in our bosoms, by dying friends, might be filled with His love. To be secure ourselves in Christ, to live and to do all we can for others in His name—this is the condition that affords peace and joy. The Master does all things well. May he sustain and comfort you under this trial, and sanctify the bereavement to us all. Who will go next, or in what order we shall be called to follow our departed friend, is not a matter for concern, so that we are prepared for the summons. With love to all your household, believe me,

"Yours affectionately,

"E. NOTT."

On the death of another friend with whom he had long been on terms of intimacy, the Rev. Freeborn Garretson of Rhinebeck, a Methodist clergyman of distinction, and most estimable man, he thus writes to Mrs. Nott, then on a visit to Boston. Mr. Garretson was a brother-in-law of Mr. Tillottson, who, with his family, was among Dr. Nott's most attached and cherished friends.

"MY DEAR GERTRUDE: I have just received intelligence of the death of Mr. Garretson. Our families have been so long intimate, that it seems as though a breach has been made in that little community which we consider a part of ourselves. And so indeed it is, for there are few men yet to die whom I esteem more. Indeed, should I live a while longer, of those whom I have intimately known none will be left. I am not indeed what is called an old man, but I have outlived my generation, and begin thus early to find myself alone in the world.

"How mysterious are the ways of God! Mr. Tillottson, whom I left apparently on a death-bed, has risen, and Mr. Garretson, who was, when I saw him last, more than usually active, has since lain down to rise no more!

"After a few days it will be said of us as it is now said of Mr. G., They are dead. And then how soon shall we be forgotten. There is no securing one's memorial on earth. I have always been hurried, and yet I have done so little. This life is too short to raise any enduring monuments. It is of no moment. Our only consolation is, God does not die. We are all his creatures. It were only to be desired that we could know him better, and love him more, and not drag out our whole existence here as though we were the mere creatures of appetite and passion. But with age especially, whatever is done must be done quickly. Time does not wait for us, nor will death postpone his coming. The death of friends is a personal admonition. May God keep you and bring you back in safety."

The following letter has an interest from the tone of affectionate familiarity with the dear daughter to whom it was written, and its touching remembrance of one of that lowly class in whose welfare and elevation, during all his life, Dr. Nott was deeply interested. It was occasioned by the death of an old colored woman, who had lived long in the family and was held in high regard by all who knew her humble worth. It is addressed to his daughter, Mrs. Potter.

"I yesterday attended the funeral of old Christine. She died after a sickness of about one week. She was resigned to death, and, I hope, was prepared for it. Though not immediately in my own family, this death seems to have come near to us.

"I followed her remains to the burying-ground assigned to the colored people on the hill,* and when I saw her coffin lowered down into its narrow house, I could not but be struck with the perfect equality to which death reduces us. Her dust reposes in a more elevated spot, and is less likely to be disturbed, than that of those who are buried nearer the abodes of living men.

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* "*Assigned to the colored people on the hill.*" Dr. Nott here expresses no reprobation of the most unchristian practice referred to. He was not called upon to do it in such a correspondence, and his well-known views of the rights of colored men, and of the equality of the human race, especially when regarded as standing before the bar of God, or in the presence of the grave, preclude the necessity of any apologizing. The question then had not been publicly raised, because it was buried, as we may say, shut out of sight, by the more immediate and pressing question of slavery, to the solution of which Dr. Nott so greatly contributed. How instinctively does the true Christian conscience revolt at such an idea! Separate graves for the colored dead! Separate pens for black "sheep," aye, and for black "goats," too, at the day of judgment! There might seem a satanic irony in the latter thought, and yet it is surpassed by the horror we ought to feel when we take a right view of the other. The term *unchristian* as applied to it, is inadequate. It is *antichristian*, diametrically *opposed to Christ*, and to all that the Gospels teach us of the common ruin, and the one common redemption. The idea is bad enough when held in regard to what are called "civil rights." But here is something far more revolting. The exclusion from the hotel, from the steamboat, from the theatre, is *degradation* indeed; it is cruelty, it is injustice, it is giving the lie to our democracy, it brings the charge of hypocrisy upon our pretence of having abolished slavery, when we have only exchanged it for a much worse thing in establishing caste. It taints the universal citizenship by the delusive extension of it to beings who are deemed fit victims of such a debasing difference. But the other practice goes still beyond this. To shut out the African from the school, from the church, from the communion table, above all, to deny him burial in the common *cemetery*, the common *sleeping place* of the dead, is the most direct denial of his humanity, and, in this way, the most direct insult to his Maker and Redeemer. The idea of separate schools only makes it the greater refinement of cruelty. What kind of an education is that for the colored child, which teaches him, for its very first lesson, that he is a degraded being who can never rise! We raise an outcry against the Roman Catholic for his alleged bigotry in relation to "consecrated burying-grounds;" but how they shame our Protestantism in this respect! The Negro may be buried in the Catholic cemetery. We make ours unconsecrated, unholy, by a denial which is a denial, not of a common dogma, but of a common humanity.—T. L.

"There is the association of loneliness in such secluded cemeteries. But there is no solitude where God is not. Though I have often thought of it, I have never dared to choose a place of burial. It was reasonable enough however, to do so; and I think there is something in us that predisposes us to repose our ashes in the place where we received our birth. I have changed so often that there is no place that seems quite like home; or, if there is, it is the vicinity of my mother's sepulchre. These, however, are small things. To be prepared for death, to be prepared for what is to follow it—this is the point of high concern."

A letter written to his brother sometime subsequently, on the death of another member of his family, illustrates the tenderness of his sympathies, his promptness in speaking soothing words to the bereaved, and the humble estimate he was wont to put upon his own achievements and services. There has been no attempt to give these letters in chronological order. Dr. Nott was not scrupulous in the matter of dates, many of his letters having the day and month recorded, but not the year, while others are without any date whatever, and the defect, at this day, could be only partially supplied, by a comparison of the circumstances in the several letters, with data elsewhere found. The true features of the writer's character appear in them none the less, and to exhibit these, is the main purpose of spreading out before the reader these familiar and unpremeditated utterances.

"MY DEAR BROTHER: I perceive that the hand of God is again upon you, and that another of your children has been called to the great account. So it is, in the arrangements of Providence; children are called to mourn the loss of parents, and parents to indite the epitaphs and rear the tombstones of their children. In all this there is wisdom, no doubt, but man seeth it not. You have lived longer than myself, and yet I have lived longer than most men. Why this is so I know not, or, why I have lived at all. I have had a very busy life, yet I have accomplished very little. I am dissatisfied with the past. I have less assured hope for the future than I could desire. And yet, wavering as that hope is, I would not part with it, for the full assurance of all that earth could give me.

"I have had many warnings this year. Many of my old acquaintance have gone to the other world. Among them Doctor Yates, whom you knew. He died full of faith and hope.

"The sundering of these ties is doubtless needful. In our prosperity and in the midst of comforts and friends, were we asked, when we should be prepared for heaven, it were difficult to answer. Nature in us would exclaim, as we looked round on these things, 'Not yet; it is good for us to be here.'

"But the spoiler cometh—companions are cut down, children are taken away, friends removed, and we begin to live alone in the midst of the busy world around us. Thus it is that, as the ties that bind us to the earth are cut away, we are led to think of another world, and aspire to a higher life.

"That you enjoy the support which religion affords, under your late and sore bereavement, I doubt not. You have, moreover, one consolation, and that the sweetest—that the departed sleeps in Jesus. It was the response of no fabled oracle that said, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.' The dead, they will not return to us, but we will go to them. May God prepare us for whatever further trials await us before we are called to our last account—an account, who, without trembling, can think of rendering in?

"We have lived, old as we are, another year. Shall we live to meet again? That is known to Him only who holds our destiny in his hands. . . . The college is prosperous. You have a grandson here, John Nott, a son of Samuel. He is a bright young man, a good scholar, and is well and doing well.

"Yours in affection,

"E. NOTT."

These are ordinary letters, written under ordinary circumstances, and yet they are characteristic. They present the usual homely topics of consolation, but the serious reader can hardly fail to see that there is something unusual in their style. It is that air of deep mournfulness by which they are pervaded, a feeling of death and sorrow that disdains all artificial sentimentalities, and welcomes the simplest language as its most truthful vehicle. "We must all die," may indeed be regarded as commonplace both in thought and expression; its impressiveness, as used by Dr. Nott, comes from the conviction felt by all who most intimately conversed with him, that death was an idea predominantly present to his mind, more habitually entertained than by many of his clerical brethren who were sometimes inclined to charge him with a worldly spirit and demeanor. The tenor of all his preaching shows this. His sermons ever had a sombre cast: death, judgment, eternity, were ever their leading topics.

These letters show also the lively interest which Dr. Nott took in matters that concerned the welfare of families endeared to him by the ties of friendship—how he sorrowed with the sorrowing, and stood ready to apply the balm which the stricken heart most needs. He had his own domestic griefs, and knew the value of the remedy which kindly hands brought and applied in his hour of trial. Years had passed since his own little circle had been invaded by "the spoiler." His children had grown up around him, and had become the heads of families, with children claiming from him the like solicitude that his own had demanded in the early years of his married life. Another blow, and a severe one, was now again to fall upon him. His beloved daughter, Mrs. Potter, who had returned to Schenectady a few years before, and who, to her father's great joy, had become, with her family, an inmate of his own house, was suddenly removed from a circle which she so greatly adorned. Dr. Nott's affection for this, his only daughter, has been already mentioned. On her coming back to cheer him with her daily presence, he had the hope and prospect that the association so happily renewed, would continue till his own death, in God's good time, should interrupt it. He had little thought that the younger would be taken before the older, still less, that so short a time after her return to dwell in her father's presence should witness her removal to the house appointed for all living. Unexpected as was the blow, he received it with his wonted calmness, and with tender resignation to the will of God. In the following touching letter to the Reverend Samuel Nott, he gives vent to his deep paternal sorrow.

"UNION COLLEGE, March 19, 1839.

"MY DEAR BROTHER: It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the death of Mrs. Potter. She died a few hours after giving birth to a daughter, who is alive and well. This is an overwhelming Providence to us all, especially to myself. She was a very dear child, and to me so needful in my old age. I had hoped she would attend my death-bed, and close my eyes, but God has ordered otherwise. She was my strongest tie to earth, and it is broken. A void is left that none but God can fill. We mourn indeed, but not without hope. She was a Christian of no common order, and, was, I trust, ripe, for heaven, whither I hope she has gone, and whence I would not, if I could, recall her. I will go to her; she will not—and I rejoice that she will not—return to me. We lost a little infant, but this is the first death among our grown-up children. They are all born to die—when and in what order they will be called away, is known only to Him who numbers our days and appoints the bounds of our habitation.

"What a mysterious Providence is the death of Maria! She has left seven children; all small, one an infant. 'Though we know not now, we shall know hereafter.' I am sure it is wise and merciful, and, though I cannot understand, I can trust the dispensation of my Heavenly Father. He will provide for these motherless children. He can sanctify this death to them, to me, to all. We may or may not meet on earth to talk over once more our cares and sorrows and joys. Be this as it may, our work is nearly done. And, in looking back I can appropriate the words of the preacher, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'

"May God keep and bless you and yours and me and mine, and, our journey ended, may we meet our friends who have died in the Lord, and gone before us into heaven. If we were sure of this, then, 'Death, where would be thy sting; grave, where thy victory?' Blessed be God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Your afflicted brother,

"E. NOTT."

The death of this daughter, at the time and under the circumstances so affectingly recounted in this letter, was indeed a sore trial. It needed deep heart-religion, lofty faith, to bow without a repining word to the stroke, and bless the name of the Lord who had taken away what he had given. How serious the loss was, not only to the father who had found such comfort and support in the society and ministry of this beloved child, but to the whole bereaved circle, will appear from the following sketch of Mrs. Potter's character, drawn by one who knew her most intimately:

> "She was preëminently a woman. Her person, her tastes, and affections, her manners and conversation, all savored of that delicacy and beauty which we associate with the most favored of her sex. There was that about her, especially as she ripened in years, which left its fragrance in every circle long after she retired, which impressed beholders with the feeling that she belonged to a higher sphere, and which filled those who had only heard of her with strange regrets that it had never been their privilege to know her intimately. While fitted to embellish, and give dignity to any station, she yet allied herself to a young man without family or fortune, and who had nothing but his character and earnest labors to warrant a claim to such honor. She submitted with the utmost cheerfulness to the drudgeries and seclusion of their lot; nerved herself to all the labors and anxieties incident to maternity; animated her husband in his studies and public ministrations; and shed over all the relations of life an exquisite grace. She became the mother of six sons and one daughter. Wiser, more faithful, or loving mother, children never had. With a strong taste for letters, and a delicate relish for beauty and wit, she gave herself, seemingly without a pang, to her household, to her friends, and to any whom she could make more happy." *

This great sorrow was soon followed by another sore bereavement, occasioned by the death of his second wife, with whom he had lived for more than thirty years since the date of his marriage as mentioned, page 200. She was a lady of wealth, of high position in society, a valuable assistant to her distinguished husband in all his labors, and a

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* "Memoir of Bishop Alonzo Potter," pp. 93, 94.

faithful mother to the children whom the first marriage had left to her care. She died early in 1840, leaving one son, Mr. Howard Nott, the only offspring of this second marriage, and the youngest member of the President's family still surviving him.

Notice has been taken of Dr. Nott's large charity, of the liberal and catholic spirit which marked him in his intercourse with Christians of every name, and in the judgments which he passed upon those whose religious faith differed from his own. No man was less fitted than he for acting the rôle of the bigot, or for the work of the bitter controversialist. He could ever do justice, and ever rejoiced to do justice to those whose opinions happened not to be in unison with his own. He could not believe that honesty was confined to the single denomination within which his lot was cast, and that others who did not happen to see truth as he saw it, were for that reason worthy of indiscriminate revilings. He adhered to his own faith firmly. He held the "form of sound words" embodying the faith of the early New-England fathers. He would make no compromise with error. He was ready at all times to give a reason for his own convictions, and to persuade others, who had gone astray from truth, to return to the right path. But he was satisfied that all unduly urged conversions, all changes from one faith to another that were not the result of impartial conviction, wrought harm instead of good. He did not treat errorists therefore as criminals, thus putting barriers in their way, but as moral agents, not perversely wrong, and who might yet be won to the truth. He regarded harsh denunciation as the worst possible argument that could be used—and his language therefore, in speaking of those who held opinions deemed heretical, is uniformly temperate and respectful; treating them as persons whom he judged to be as honest as himself. A letter to a clerical friend, on the subject of exchanges with a class of preachers not deemed quite orthodox, will exhibit not only his large liberality, but the calm wisdom with which he was wont to give counsel to the friends soliciting it:

"MY DEAR SIR: Yours of April 5th has come to hand. I am afflicted, though not greatly surprised at its contents. I am not aware of giving any precise advice to you as to the question of exchanges, nor was I aware that the vote of your society had reference to them as made with any particular party. I have considered them no part of a minister's duty. I should, I think, have attended to my pastoral office, and, with a congregation situated as yours is, exchanged with no one on either side. I had supposed that this was your intention, not to exchange at all; nor can I see how you can take any other ground with safety, till you have become acquainted with your congregation, and with the religious state of the contiguous community. It is the only safe ground. Such I supposed to be your purpose; and to this I gave my approval. As respects the general question, I have not yet been able to make up my mind whether I would exchange with persons considered heterodox in New England. There is a limit where Christian charity must stop. But that there are not Christians, and Christian ministers, too, among those termed *liberal*, is what I dare not assume. I will not judge of men in the gross with whom I am not acquainted personally. Controversy always embitters, and people in dispute often appear farther apart than they really are. Then, too, there is so little religion on either side, that it is difficult for a man to satisfy either party, unless he will enter the lists of the one or the other.

"If you have already formed exchanges, you are committed; if you have not, the wiser way, it seems to me, is not to exchange at all till you know the state of things; and never to do it till it can be done without giving offence to either party. It may be too late for you to take this course; and the danger will be that you will go over to one side, thereby losing all influence with the other—and thus be in danger, too, of partaking in the prevalent asperity. If the door is yet open, I would endeavor to convince those gentlemen that it was not a personal thing with me—that I could not thus act without giving offence to one party or the other; that I did not want to mix in any difficulty beyond my own charge; that there I would labor only while I could be useful; but that, if I was likely to be the occasion of discord I would withdraw. If, however, you would not take the ground of not exchanging at all, or if the people will not consent to it, I see no way for you to live in peace. Is it wrong to exchange with the liberal party or not? I suppose the strict theologian would revolt from it. I forbear to say what I think of it as a question of duty in the abstract, because I do not know enough of the real opinions and character of liberal Christians, to say they are no Christians. And, because I cannot say this, I will not say it is wrong to hold Christian intercourse with them. Had I been in your place when asked to exchange, I should have said it was not convenient, and that it was my purpose to preach at home till I became acquainted with my flock. I would, moreover, have sought an opportunity to convince these ministers who wanted me to exchange, that, however kindly disposed toward them I might be, it was not expedient for me to comply with their wishes, because I could not do it without giving offence to one part of the congregation.

"But perhaps the opinions in New England are such that a minister cannot get along without exchanges—so that all I have said will go for nothing. I can only add, therefore, that you must be very meek, humble, prudent, and prayerful. Keep your counsel; neither write nor speak imprudently, and think as well as you can of those who may seem to be crossing your views, or disturbing your peace. They have their partialities, we have ours; and both are liable to error, and all need forgiveness. May God guide and bless you.

"E. Nott."

Some people would call this double-sided, truth-compromising, non-committal, etc. To judge aright we must carry ourselves back to that day, and put ourselves, if we can, in the position of Dr. Nott and the Rev. Mark Tucker, the person addressed. We see now how great the divergency has become, and may perhaps exult in the idea that our wisdom could have predicted it. Then there was still the prospect of healing. As viewed from such a standpoint, what we would now call indifference to truth, or a halting non-committalism, may have been the purest exhibibition of that "charity which hopeth all things."

In another letter to the same friend, a few days after, he refers again to the differences that prevent harmony of feeling and of action on the part of orthodox and liberal Christians, so called, and indicates the proper course for the former to pursue in order to discharge their own duty, while causing no exasperation, and giving no unnecessary offence to those holding a position of antagonism. The point which he raises in regard to the use of terms not found in Scripture to express one's doctrinal belief, may by some be looked upon as conceding too much. However this may be, it cannot be denied that the religious status of the writer is stated with perfect distinctness. He says:

> "You must write and say the least possible of men and things in your *place* and in your *State*. Silence produces silence. I would cease to talk, either to friends or foes, or about them, while I would strive to preach better, and pray more. Nothing should be said of S—— people, or of bigotry; much of God, and sin, and death, judgment, heaven and hell, and of the way to both. The same frank and affectionate treatment should be shown to what you call your anti-Trinitarian hearers as before. It may be they will assail your doctrines; it will be yours to see that you do not give occasion to do so, by preaching another Gospel than the very Bible, and in other words than those of the Bible. I would not deny my Saviour, to avoid even martyrdom, but it is not necessary to assert His divinity in words and forms which the Bible has not sanctioned. Even 'Unitarian' and 'Trinitarian,' and 'Persons in the Godhead,' whether one or three, are modes of expression, ancient indeed, but more recent than the form of sound words which you are bound in conscience to adhere to. If my doctrines were complained of, I should strive to see that it should be on account of their agreement, and not their disagreement, with the formula which God and the Son of God have sanctioned. It may be, however, that no forbearance or prudence will prevent a rupture; the wise way, therefore, will be to make up your mind for the worst. In the meantime, endeavor to supply other and better subjects of thought than orthodoxy or heterodoxy. Mankind must have something to talk about, but I would avoid, even in my room, and with my most confidential friends, all talking of Unitarians. The birds of the air carry the whisperings of the secret chamber. You will be in danger of speaking confidentially to one and another, and they to their confidants, and they to the friends of the party concerned, and then explanations will be requisite, and after that a breach of confidence."

One who calls this double-dealing, or who is not impressed with it as a loving effort, and, in this sense, a holy effort, to prevent the widening of differences that might yet be healed, has never studied, as he ought to study, Paul's picture of the Heavenly Love—the charity that "vaunteth not itself, behaveth not unseemly, is never rash, seeketh not her own, rejoices never in evil, but always in the truth."

An additional letter, written a few months after the former one, when the clerical friend was rejoicing in a season of exemption from the disturbing elements which had heretofore given him so much uneasiness, breathes the true spirit of Christian forbearance, and conveys the most edifying counsel.

"DEAR SIR: Your favor has been received. I hope you do not write with the same freedom to others that you do to me. If you do, you will, at some future time, regret it. I rejoice that the tumult in your place has subsided. But though it has subsided, be assured that the elements which produced it are more powerful than you apprehend. The time will come when these elements will again be in motion, and perchance under circumstances more favorable to effect. You have only to watch and pray, and be exemplary, and leave the event with God. Until a great reformation shall take place, or a secession be fairly made, you will never be able to calculate on peace. It is very difficult to be candid to enemies, and it would be strange if you, like other men, did not overrate their bad qualities, and impute them, perhaps, to an improper cause. Human nature itself, without any aggravation of sect, is sufficient to account for envy, wrath, strife, deceit—for all malevolence. By great prudence and kindness you may soften the unkind feelings of your opponents; it is doubtful whether you can cure them."

Sentiments like the above led some to charge Dr. Nott with indifference to orthodoxy, or even as betraying a leaning toward Unitarianism taking the form of Liberal Christianity. A criticism of this kind had been made by Dr. Mason, in a magazine which he conducted, at the time referred to by the writer of the account on page 127. As that writer truly says, these two eminent men came afterward to a Christian understanding; but with some there still remained the tendency to impute to Dr. Nott a laxity of opinion. There is no disposition to laud unduly the subject of this biography, or to overlook defects ; but nothing could be more uncharitable than such a suspicion. Dr. Nott held, all his life, purely and firmly, the theology of the Westminster Catechism, as taught him by his mother, and confirmed by her early old-fashioned New England education. He valued it none the less for being, at first, the teaching of authority ; for his religious life had grown into it, and he found it adapted to spiritual wants which no other system could satisfy. He held it too purely and vitally for polemical controversy. Its sharp points were of individual application, as severe tests of his own religious life, while he cherished every hope which any veiled or unveiled word of his Saviour would permit him to entertain for the salvation of others. This theology was not Edwardean, or Hopkinsian, or Emmonian, or even after the milder type of Dr. Dwight. It was rather the earlier Puritanism of New England, mellowed and rendered more genial by age, without any abatement of that calm confidence with which it possessed the soul, as a system resting on the Scriptures rather than on metaphysical or rationalistic argument. It was the older Calvinism, which calmly left men in the hands of God, instead of the later modification, as it claimed to be, but which only increased its apparent harshness by the attempt to divest it of its mystery, and to reduce it to a severer logic. In his religious views, Dr. Nott was ever as gentle as he was firm. It is a great mistake to regard such mildness as any evidence of a wavering faith. Ultramontane pretensions may be—they often are—the poor cover of a shivering unbelief. They may reveal, in fact, a very timid faith, not hypocritical, perhaps, but feverish and zealous because of its weakness ; all the more furiously intolerant toward those who differ from it theologically, because it regards them, not simply as erring men to be pitied and recovered, if possible, but as actual enemies who would despoil it of what it holds by so feeble a grasp. None are so charitable—because none can so well afford it—as they who are most firmly, and, at the same time, most quietly grounded in their religious views. Bigotry and cowardice are closely allied. So, too, they who boast of a transcendental creed, demanding even impossibilities, and they who would reduce their confession to a minimum, may not be far apart, as they may be alike wanting in the elements of a reverential and practical belief, subduing the heart and calmly reigning in the intellect. There are men, far below Dr. Nott in his placid holding to the deeper truths of revelation, who have greatly exceeded him in dogmatic zeal. During the controversies in the Presbyterian Church, he quietly maintained the views which have been called "Old School," or substantially as they are held at Princeton ; but he could not go with the measures, on either side, which led to that disruption he so greatly deplored, and for the healing of which, now so happily accomplished, he gave the latest labors of his life. The firmness of Dr. Nott's theology was due to its being so strongly grounded on a Scriptural anthropology, and buttressed, as we may say, by a *fact* which history does not permit us to doubt. He had a strong belief in human *depravity*—total, he would not have hesitated to call it, if regard be had, not so much to degree, as to its *universality*, its predominance in every man, and, to some extent, in all human action, except as changed or affected by divine grace. He held, as a fearful reality, the doctrine of the birth-sin as inherited from the First Adam. He believed, sorrowfully, that there was in each individual a great evil which Christ alone, the Second Adam, could ever heal. He could not resist the historical evidence that there was a deep taint in humanity which no amount of knowledge, no refinement of culture, no progress in civilization, no mere human effort of any kind, could ever be relied on to remove. Dr. Nott was very fond of Watts. It will be remembered how his emphatic mode of reading the hymnist's paraphrase of Isaiah liii. 6, made it a vehicle, not only of devotional feeling, but of impressive doctrinal truth.

"Like sheep we went astray,
And broke the fold of God;

Each wandering in a different way,
But all the downward road."

A harsh dogma, many will say. It may be so as a mere dogma, or when the dreadful truth is maintained as a cold theological speculation. But, as held by the subject of our biography, it contained the very "milk of human kindness." It was not the scorn of the satirist, of men, like Swift, or Dickens, or Thackeray, delighting often in drawing the blackest pictures of human nature, while showing their irrepressible hatred of the sober theological truth as sorrowfully expressed by the loving Apostle. Satire never did the world any good; it never reformed either an individual or an age. Satirists themselves have been men of questionable moral character; and even when sincerely striving, in their own poor way, to arouse mankind to a better life, they have missed the strongest motives for their appeals. This has been because of their so blindly overlooking the deepest fact in human nature, lying, as it does, below those mere individual differences that tempt the probings of their superficial, because self-ignoring, sagacity. "We are all fallen beings." The idea, as thus expressed, and as thus held by Dr. Nott, was the source of all genuine philanthropy. The deep feeling of brotherhood in ruin was the spring of all right effort for human good, as it furnished the surest ground for any hope of success. "The many are bad," the *οἱ πολλοί*, the "great many," the multitude, the race is bad, fallen—all needing cleansing and redemption. The first part of this proposition he expressed in terms very similar to those of the heathen historian Thucydides;* but he held it on the far deeper grounds furnished by the words of the philanthropist Paul, and of the merciful Redeemer.

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* *Thucydides*, lib. iii. 45.—"All men sin *by nature* both in public and private life; there is no law strong enough to restrain them from it." So, in his Book of Problems, Aristotle proposes it, as a grave inquiry into the reasons of a settled and universally acknowledged fact: *διὰ τί οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί*; "Why are the many bad?"—the great multitude, the mass, as the Greek phrase implies. If this be true then surely the political philosophy, or political economy, that ignores it, must be false from top to bottom.

CHAPTER XX.

LETTERS—COLLEGE SEMICENTENNIAL.

General character of Dr. Nott's correspondence—A sound adviser—Letters to a clerical friend, asking advice—Samuel Nott's sixtieth anniversary of his pastorate—Letters to him on receipt of the sermon on that occasion—Dr. Nott's third marriage—His modest estimate of his own life-services—Letter to his brother—Estimation in which he was held by his pupils—Semicentennial of the college—Great gathering of the Alumni—Address—By Rev. M. Sweetman—By Professor Alonzo Potter at Alumni dinner—By Hon. John C. Spencer—By President Nott—A half century record.

THE correspondence of Dr. Nott, during his long and busy life, was very extensive and very varied in its character. Many of his letters, however, were on business matters, short, practical, and of little general interest. Many others addressed to friends of earlier days, some of them prominent in their period, and treating often of subjects of more than local or transient interest, were either not preserved, or were placed beyond recovery by the changes constantly going on in families by the lapse of years. He kept no copies of his correspondence, attaching seemingly no importance to it, beyond the purpose subserved for the time. His letters, however, though hurried for the most part, and rarely receiving much care, unless some specially important subject demanded deliberation, were characteristic of his mental habitudes, as well as of his calm and sagacious spirit. In giving advice to others this was very marked. And if his letters of this sort were not models of graceful and eloquent composition, they exhibited a freshness of suggestion, a sound common sense, a solid judgment and a genial Christian temper, which more than made amends for the absence of qualities of less instrinsic value.

As an illustration of this an extract or two will be given from letters conveying advice to a ministerial friend, who, in consequence of some annoyances and difficulties in his congregation, laid his case before Dr Nott, and asked his aid.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR: Your favor came to hand just as I was about to leave home for several weeks. I hasten, therefore, to forward a brief reply, though I hardly know what to say. Little dependence can be placed on *side bar* opinions. To judge a case, one must understand it in all its bearings. As a general rule, it is wise to remain at one post till called to another. There may, however, be exceptions. 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself.' If it be certain that you will be compelled to leave, then it will be wise to anticipate the catastrophe, and go without compulsion. But in the absence of an open door elsewhere, it would not be wise to produce, by any act of yours, the necessity in question. As to speaking of your grievances to your people (until the case becomes desperate and you have made up your mind to produce a change in them, or leave at all hazards), I should rather advise against it. As long as the griefs springing out of social relations are bearable, it is best to bear them in silence. Complaints naturally weaken rather than strengthen the hold we have on those with whom we are associated. Perhaps by concealing your difficulties, and assiduously attending to your duties, the sky may brighten up, or if not, the storm be delayed till some harbor shall present itself in which you can take refuge. This I should rather advise, unless it becomes apparent that in remaining at your present anchorage, your bark will founder, and that speedily. Then it will be wise to cut your cable at once, put to sea, and trust Providence for favorable gales and a speedy entrance into port.'

In another letter to the same friend, whose bark had remained at the same anchorage, though still waiting and hoping for propitious breezes, he says :

"I have just read yours of the 9th November, and regret to learn that your affairs are less satisfactory than could be desired . . . You ask advice. Advice given without adequate knowledge will be likely to be as little beneficial to him who receives as creditable to him who gives it . . . I always think it more desirable to leave one congregation because called to another, than to separate from it merely for the sake of seeking a new position. If a door is opened, in Providence, for removing to another charge, with a prospect of usefulness and comfort, I should certainly advise you to make your escape. But I would not, unless compelled by dire necessity, attempt to force a passage, uninvited, into any other fold.

"It is not pleasant to feel the want of kindness. Such, however, is often the lot of great and good men. After all, your condition is not so very bad as that of many who have no shelter where they can repose themselves, or who have to flee from the storm, before some Zoar is provided in which they can find refuge. Your present theatre of action is appointed for you; and there, till release arrives, you must perform your allotted part, whether of action or suffering. If God has work for you elsewhere, he will indicate it. If He has sufferings for you to endure, you will not be able to escape from them. Without a change of place, He can turn your sorrows into joys. Having had such rich experience for the past, you can, with the greater confidence trust God for the future. You must, therefore, take courage, go forward in present duty, and wait the developments of Providence . . .

"As yet we are better off than the Apostles; in a worldly sense better off than their Master. In our manifold trials we must look to Him who *endured such contradiction*—to Him who 'endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of God.' Ours, too, in the view of the approaching future, are 'light afflictions,' not to be compared with the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory hereafter to be revealed."

The following interesting letter to Dr. Samuel Nott was written in acknowledgement of the receipt of a sermon preached by the latter on the sixtieth anniversary of his settlement as pastor of the church of Franklin. The "change of situation" which he speaks of in it, refers to the writer's having been for the third time married, by his son-in-law the Rev. Dr. Potter, on the 8th of August, 1842, at Utica, to Miss Urania E. Sheldon, a lady of rare worth and accomplishments, who still survives him.

"UNION COLLEGE, September 10, 1842.

"DEAR BROTHER: I am just recovering from a severe attack of illness, and hasten to do what I have wished to do before. Whether you received a letter from Professor Potter in relation to my change of situation, I do not certainly know. Your sermon has been read with deep interest. And, though on my last visit I witnessed the mighty change which time had effected, I was not aware that the desolations of death had been so great as I find by this *sixtieth anniversary sermon* has been the case. I learn with deep regret that Mrs. Hyde is recorded among the number of those who have gone to their last home. I cannot think of her but as a young woman, nor hardly of myself in any other light than as a youth, and yet I have reached almost the common limit of man's life, and am surrounded with children and children's children. It seems but a short time since I resided in Franklin; and there, too, resided then, numerous early acquaintance who have since been enrolled among the congregation of the dead.

"Of those known to me, there are but few more names remaining to be entered on that register of death. Your life and health are truly wonderful, and yet, after all, how short has even that life been. What are seventy or eighty, or even your own age of ninety years, in comparison with eternity? and for this eternity the present is the only season of preparation. The Gospel is rich in promises, and free in its offers of mercy. But the amazing danger of being deceived in our hopes, this is the thought that overwhelms me—the idea that a mistake here is a mistake for which there is no remedy. Well is it required of us 'to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure.'

"As I go down the hill of life, this world appears of less and less account. How must it appear when we reach its close? How must it appear in the searching light of death, and when the world to come opens before us? I had but one daughter to lose, and of her God has deprived me. I know the bitterness of such a loss, and can the more readily sympathize with you in your late bereavements. I have not learned the circumstances of your daughter's decease. But I know she enjoyed the consolations of religion in life, and trust, therefore, that she was not forsaken in death. . . .

"Whether we shall meet again seems doubtful, considering our ages and the dangers to which we must be exposed. I feel that I cannot remain long in this world. The little space I have occupied will soon be filled up; what I have said and done will be forgotten on the earth; and yet its effects may be felt, for good or ill, for years to come. This it is that gives consequence to being.

"Very affectionately,

"E. Nott."

The estimate which Dr. Nott puts upon his labors, and the services he had rendered to society during the many years of his influential life, was very modest indeed, and this was habitual to him; the evidence of it abounding in the letters, written with the utmost unreserve, to those who knew him best. It was no affectation of humility that led him to speak in these terms of self-depreciation. He felt as he wrote; not regarding his life-work indeed as absolutely useless, or his influence for good as having been exerted in vain, but comparing what he had done with what he might have done, his opportunities with the results achieved, his long life with the record it had made, he was not satisfied; and confessed, honestly and frankly, that he had accomplished, after all, very little to entitle him to an abiding memory among men. His judgment of himself, religiously considered, was hardly more favorable. From his frequent confessions of remissness and want of spirituality, one might almost be led to conclude that he knew little of the power of heart-religion, were it not for his reverent and submissive spirit so constantly displayed, his hope in the divine mercy, the unfaltering trust he ever seems to repose in Christ's power and love. Sentiments like these pervade and form a very striking feature of those letters which most completely reveal his inner thoughts and emotions, as in this to his brother, who was then ninety-one years old.

"UNION COLLEGE, May, 1844.

"DEAR BROTHER: Your favor of May 3, came in course of mail, and brought with it the grateful intelligence of your continued life and activity. Few who have lived have reached such an age, and in such comfort, or with such usefulness. Few will do this hereafter. I had heard of the death of sister Chester previous to the receipt of your letter. I did not know and do not remember much concerning her. I rejoice to hear that she sustained a Christian character, and left the world in the faith of the Gospel. All is well that ends well—and, if we are not made for immortality it is not easy to see why we were made. The wonderful and progressive faculties of man seem ill suited to a life so empty and so brief. So far as earth and time are concerned, no reason is apparent why such a being as man should be created and placed here. Immortality apart, all is an enigma, which philosophy cannot solve, but which revelation explains; dimly indeed, for, after all the light which the Bible sheds on this dark dispensation, clouds and darkness still hang around the throne as well as cover the footstool of God.

"The great plan of salvation does indeed give importance to human life. And yet, even while holding that blest volume in the hand, it is impossible not to feel that 'God hideth himself.' There is no walking by sight; and faith alas! is often too weak to guide our steps.

"They indeed are blessed who have full assurance—who, though on this side Jordan, stand with Moses on the top of Pisgah, and with unclouded eye look over into Canaan. There is sufficient in the covenant to satisfy the desires, and banish the fears, and establish the hopes of the sinner. But to avail one's self of that sufficiency, at least while such imperfection cleaves to us, is difficult. Christians live so much like other men (and I include myself among the number), that it is ever a stumbling-block to me. Can such Christians, with such feeble growth in grace, ever be fit for heaven? Or, is death to work a special transformation; and if not, how, when, will beings who live at our 'poor dying rate,' be fit for the society of angels and the presence of God? We have been looking for the millennium, and many have thought it near. But it seems to me that Christians are receding farther and farther from each other, and loving each other less and less.

"Unless God interpose in some special manner there is little hope for the world. Still there is the cheering assurance that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He can arrest the tendencies of evil, and create a new earth as well as a new heaven. Let us then repose our hope upon his promise and pray, 'Thy kingdom come.'

"I have been to Washington, New York, and Boston lately, in aid of the movement making in favor of the observance of the Sabbath. On that subject there was a hearing ear in many places, but whether a national reformation will be effected depends on the divine purposes not yet developed. There is little faith, in this behalf, to be placed in man.

"Very affectionately, your brother,

"E. NOTT."

At the time when these letters were written, in which Dr. Nott speaks of himself and his services with so much diffidence, the college had become highly prosperous, and was exerting a widely beneficent influence. Here at least was the evidence of successful enterprise and devotion to a great work, and here was a record made, which could not, in the nature of the case, be speedily obliterated. The pupils of Dr. Nott, who had not gone forth from the college during all the years from 1804, and who were scattered over the country, each performing his own part in the stirring drama of practical life, knew and were ready to acknowledge how much they owed to their venerable teacher. They delighted to honor him, to speak his praises, to recount and dwell upon their personal obligations. No president of a college ever had a stronger hold upon the affections of his pupils. Wherever these were found in after years, they bore a well-nigh uniform testimony to the rare worth of the venerable teacher at whose feet they had sat, blending with their expressions of respect sentiments of strongest personal attachment. To have produced, for successive years, an effect of this kind upon so many young men, of various minds and tempers, an effect which the lapse of years scarcely impaired, evinces very high and rare qualifications for the work of an instructor.

Fifty years had at length passed away since the life of the college began, and on the 22d of July, 1845, its semicentennial anniversary was held. Preparations for its observance had been begun by the alumni two years before. It was resolved that there should be formed a committee of twenty, of the classes graduating from 1797 to 1817, to carry the purpose into effect. This committee was appointed at the next annual gathering, in the commencement week of 1844. At a special meeting held at the college on the 16th of October of the same year, two sub-committees were appointed, one on correspondence, and one on arrangements. Circulars were sent to all the graduates of the college whose places of residence could be ascertained, and the authorities of the city promptly and heartily coöperated in measures to carry out effectively the arrangements for the memorable anniversary. The alumni responded in large numbers to the invitations sent them, and when the day arrived, the concourse of these was found far greater than any the old town of Schenectady had ever before witnessed. Every class that had graduated from the institution was represented, several of the earliest by one or two members who still survived; the numbers becoming larger as the years ran down from 1797. The exercises proper were held in the Reformed Dutch Church, which was thronged in every part. The first orator was the Rev. Joseph Sweetman, of Charlton, New York, one of two survivors of the class of 1797, the first one which had graduated from the college. His address was deeply interesting, for its reminiscences, and for the earnest practical lessons which the tremulous emotion of the venerable speaker's utterance made peculiarly affecting. The touching extract from this address, on page 108, supersedes the necessity of giving here the whole, which is in the same pleasant and impressive strain.

It was followed by an address from Professor Alonzo Potter, of the class of 1818, who had been selected to render this service the year preceding, and who, with the exercises of this memorial occasion was to close that official connection with the college, which had lasted twenty-one years. Dr. Potter had been chosen Bishop of Pennsylvania in the spring of this year, and he was soon to enter upon the duties of his new charge. This circumstance added interest to the address he now delivered, which was one of singular eloquence and power. In regard to the work which the college had performed, he thus spoke:

> "From the departed we turn to the living. Do you ask what our college has done for mankind? We point to the two thousand surviving graduates, who represent her in every part of our Republic, and in far distant lands. They have gone forth as well toward the rising as toward the setting sun. In three of the New England States, there are leading colleges or universities under the presidency of scholars and divines who were educated here. In every one of those States, too are, men occupying leading or most useful positions in professional and active life, who claim the same maternity. And, beyond the ocean that washes our eastern border—in India, in China, at Constantinople, at Jerusalem, in the islands of the Pacific—are devoted missionaries of the cross, whose hearts are with us to-day, and whose high enthusiasm dates, in some instances, from our halls.

In every part of our own country—in the valley of the Mississippi, the Southern Atlantic States, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware—some of the most honored presidents and professors in colleges and theological seminaries, are fellow-graduates of ours. And it may be doubted, whether there is a district fifty miles square, between this and the Rocky Mountains, inhabited by white men, in which some one of our number may not be found an active resident. More than a thousand members of the legal profession, six hundred clergymen, four hundred physicians, and two hundred and fifty teachers in academies and schools, are or have been laboring—some in affluence and distinction, others in obscurity, but a large portion, as facts would testify, usefully and honorably. To these, then, our foster-mother appeals to-day as her memorial—as her ground of claim to the world's gratitude. If there are any strangers to her *here*, to them she would say, in language borrowed from the inscription that marks the resting place of Sir Christopher Wren, in the noble cathedral reared by his science and skill, *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*

"Perhaps it may be said that such statistics are deceptive; that the able and useful citizens who have left these shades may owe their capacity and their worth to other influences. That no college can claim merit for all the merit of its children, is certain; but the concurrent judgment of mankind must be greatly at fault, if such seminaries do not exert immense and almost unequalled influence on the foundation of character. Were I called upon, however, to designate the more specific services which have been rendered here, to the cause of learning and religion, I should point, not so much to what has been done, as to what has been attempted. They who have been actors in these scenes, and who remember how far these performances fall behind the bright ideal of earlier and more sanguine years, can speak on such subjects only with diffidence, and with painful dissatisfaction at the retrospect of their best efforts. That they have desired and labored to do something for education and learning, for science and religion, they need not be ashamed to say. Education they have striven to advance, both by inspiring zeal in its behalf and also by setting before the young, in their teaching and discipline, such methods as, in their judgment, were best calculated to develop thought, enlarge enquiry, and lay the basis of lasting habits of self-control and self-improvement. Philosophy, in the true sense of the term, they have sought to advance—not by teaching systems merely, but by laboring, in humble imitation of Socrates, the greatest of uninspired sages, to inculcate and cherish the comprehensive and truthful spirit of all real philosophy, whether physical or metaphysical. On the altar, too, of our common Christianity, it has been their ambition to lay such offerings as would lead the young to reverence its truths and obey its laws; as would induce them to couple fervent loyalty to their own opinions, with a forbearance not less fervent toward those whose opinions may be different; as would imbue them, in fine, with that true charity which withholds not dark frowns from vice and moral obliquity, yet looks with toleration on the erring and the prejudiced. May I add, that in endeavoring to give a *practical* cast to their teachings, they have been animated by a desire so happily expressed in these words of Bacon. 'That,' said he, in his 'Advancement of Learning,' 'will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if contemplation and action may be more nearly and strongly conjoined and united together than they have been, a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets—Saturn, the planet of rest and contemplation, and Jupiter, the planet of civil society and action.'"

The exercises in the church were followed by a dinner provided for the alumni under a huge tent erected on the college grounds. Accommodations were furnished for a thousand guests, and every seat was occupied by those who had in the past years enjoyed the benefits of the Alma Mater's hospitality. The Hon. John C. Spencer, of Albany, presided, assisted by twenty vice-presidents, embracing some of the most eminent names upon the roll of the nation's distinguished men. The speaking on this memorable occasion was of a very striking character. Among those who made addresses were Governor Silas Wright, Chancellor Walworth, Hon. W. W. Campbell, J. V. L. Pruyn, N. S. Benton, Hiram P. Hunt, A. L. Linn, Bishops Wainwright and Doane, President Nott, Professor Potter, Drs. H. P. Tappan, Mark Tucker, Cyrus Mason, A. D. Eddy, and several others. The address of Mr. Spencer, who, as president of the assembled brethren, initiated the intellectual part of the festivity, was singularly appropriate and felicitous. One or two passages, in illustration of the work performed by the college, and of its catholic spirit and aims, as indicated by its very name, deserve to be presented to the reader.

"*Alma Mater!* Holy, beautiful, nursing mother! Sanctified in our affections, beautiful art thou in our eyes; thou hast nourished our intellects; thou hast planted in our souls the seeds of virtue and intelligence; thou hast watered and watched them with a mother's care; having sought to prepare us for the conflicts and the duties of life, thou hast sent us forth into the world with blessings and with prayers! And shall we not honor her, who has thus honored and formed us?

"Lo! we present our salutations to her representatives—to those by whom she is personified—to the venerable President, who, for four-fifths of the half century that has elapsed, has guided her course with his own hand at the helm. . . . Whatever trophies we may have won in honorable competition with our fellow-men, we here hang upon these walls. And if all her alumni, the living and the dead, could each bring his share, what a galaxy of honor would we behold. Seven presidents of colleges and universities; four bishops of the Episcopal Church;* professors in colleges, and doctors in Divinity, the most eminent of every Christian denomination; judges of our high tribunals; members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States; jurists distinguished among the members of a numerous profession; physicians of great repute, and crowds of those who have occupied seats in the legislative halls, or filled the important offices of our State, besides the more humble but not less useful instructors of youth, dispersed not only over our own State, but through every part of the rich West, and the sunny South.

"Its name, Union, expresses the principle of its foundation, the union of all sects and denominations, not only of pupils, but of teachers; and thus it has always had professors belonging to each of the important Christian and Protestant communions in our country, who have been able to enforce, constantly and steadily, the essential truths of the Gospel, with an avoidance of all that belongs to unessential controversy.

"Without calling in question the course of some other institutions, in which, from peculiar circumstances, a different system has prevailed, we may, at least, point to the perfect harmony, the entire absence of religious animosity, which has ever characterized the faculty of this college. It furnishes a triumphant proof that genuine catholic feeling has not entirely left the world; and that, under the guidance of practical good sense, it can subsist, and flourish, even among those whose daily intercourse and daily studies must make them well acquainted with their points of difference. What an illustrious example is thus furnished of Christian charity, and what a rebuke administered to intolerance and bigotry. The course of instruction has manifestly been framed with a view to meet the exigences of our country and our times. The subjects of study have been so selected as to prepare men, not for the cloister, not for the retired literary life, but for the world—a world of wonderful activity and enterprise, where passion and interest stimulate to the utmost tension of energy. Obvious as it was and is, that the short term of four years was not sufficient to enable pupils to become *masters* of various sciences and numerous languages, it seems to have been designed to furnish a deep and strong foundation in the most essential departments of knowledge. Upon these, in after life, such a superstructure might be raised, as circumstances might permit or occasion might require. In laying this foundation, the analytic process has been unremittingly preserved. By it the intellect has been disciplined, strengthened, rendered more acute, and thus prepared to cope with difficulty in any branch of human knowledge. For one, I can bear witness to the great advantage derived in my professional readings from adopting and applying to them the mode of study pursued in this college. In the same connection may be mentioned the English or 'scientific' course, which 'Union' was the first to introduce, as a method adapted to those whose pursuits and aims in life did not require a knowledge of the ancient languages."

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* With some later names there were seven, as has been mentioned in another place.

One of the features of most marked interest at this festive reunion, was a speech of the venerable President of the college; the greatest anxiety to hear him having been manifested by the gathered alumni. He was introduced to the audience by Chancellor Walworth, in the following sentiment:

"Our venerated and venerable President who understands the true secret of governing his students, by teaching them to govern themselves."

A few passages from the remarks uttered by Dr. Nott in reply, will be all that the limits of the present chapter will permit. These, however, will give a fair idea of the character and scope of his address. He said:

"Not a graduate of Union College myself, I had not anticipated that it would be desired that I should take any active part in the exercises of this day; and the state of my health might seem, even now, to forbid my attempting to do so. Being assured, however, that many of my former pupils had come together, expecting to hear, on this occasion, the voice, at least, which they had so often heard before, but which they could never expect to hear again. I could not find it in my heart to remain silent; and yet, in yielding to an impulse of nature, I can only offer up, in your behalf, the prayers I have already offered, and repeat counsels which I have previously given. With the feelings of a parent bidding adieu to his sons, when entering on the world, I have long been familiar. Never before have I occupied the place of a father surrounded by his children and his children's children, whom, after a lapse of years, some unusual occasion had reassembled to give and receive the welcome salutation.

"My children; with me life is waning to its close. With you it is in the bloom of youth, or perhaps the maturity of manhood. A few only are beginning to touch on the confines of age. But all of us alike must soon die, and having but a single life to live, who would not live wisely, usefully, hoping thus to meet the final plaudit of his Judge?

"Preceding generations bequeathed to us a noble inheritance—and shall we not add something to that inheritance, ere it be left to those who shall come after us? Individuals die, but institutions live. By improving the character and extending the usefulness of such of these as are to be charged with the education of youth, we confer benefits beyond ourselves, extending to distant regions and to distant times."

After some remarks on the earlier "Revival of Learning" in Europe and the "second epoch" which his sanguine hopes led him to regard as opening in America, the venerable orator is drawn by the warmth of his feelings to speak of the Christian Scriptures as the foundation of modern culture. The argument is not new. It is characterized more by fervor, and by some occasional flights of his earlier eloquence, than by originality. It was, however, admirably adapted to the occasion, and is worthy of note now, in consideration of the source whence it came. Union College was the first to break away from the New England and New Jersey idea of denominational institutions, though Dr. Nott ever acknowledged the great worth of that idea, as adapted to the earlier religious homogeneity of our country. This undenominational character, however, was quite different from what is now so much commended in the use of that unmeaning word "unsectarian." Dr. Nott would never have tolerated the thought of Christianity being a "*sect,*" or of the Bible as a sectarian book. The idea of a national university in which there should be no place for the Holy Scriptures, and the immense literature founded upon them, he would have held in abhorrence.

There was a pathos in the speaker's words, and in the occasion that called them forth, which gave a peculiar tenderness and solemnity to the close of this unstudied address.

"Never before have I so deeply felt the responsibility of the office I have so long sustained as now, surrounded as I am, by so many and such effective agents, sent forth from this seat of science to act on the destinies of man. There has been no preceding occasion of the kind, and though it will again occur, I shall not witness it—many of you who hear me will not witness it. . . We are continually dropping from the ranks, but the great procession moves on, evermore continuing and developing the sublime decrees of God. In this flow of being that knows no pause, in this perpetual series of alternate life and death, we have our appointed place. For this let us be thankful. With this let us be content, and act well our parts:

"How long or short, to heaven remit."

Let us then heed those weighty words of the Apostle, "No man liveth to himself." Educated men, especially, are stewards merely on a larger scale. They are signalized, that in them the ignorant may find instructors, and the defenceless, defenders; that the profligate may be awed by their frown, the country shielded by their virtue and their valor. . .

"You will live on and act when he who now addresses you will neither be known nor remembered among the living. Soon the cold earth will press upon his bosom. The voice silent in death will cease to warn the wanderer, or cheer the well-doing. To you, beloved pupils, who remain behind, we commit these aims of usefulness. We charge you by the love of man, by the hope of heaven, to see that the poor have benefactors, the oppressed advocates, the Saviour of sinners disciples, and the God of Heaven worshippers, so long as you shall remain upon the earth. More than this—not content, yourselves, with obeying God and helping man, endeavor to impart to other minds the same high purpose, to be by them again imparted—that thus the institution in which you were educated may become the same source and centre of an influence ever carrying down the torch of knowledge and religion until the reign of Messiah is established, and pain and sin and ignorance be banished from a renovated earth."

CHAPTER XXI.

FAILURE OF HEALTH—CORRESPONDENCE—ATTACKS—VINDICATION.

Dr. Potter's removal to Philadelphia as Bishop of Pennsylvania—His loss greatly felt by the President—Noble letter of advice from a Presbyterian Minister to a Bishop—Noble reply of the Bishop—Dr. Nott's failure of health—Attack of inflammatory rheumatism—Commencement seasons—Letters to Mr Delavan—Legislative Investigation—Conclusive Vindication of the President.

DR. POTTER'S removal to the bishopric of Pennsylvania was felt by the college as a serious loss. His long connection with the institution, his thorough devotion to its interests, his ability as a teacher, his fidelity in the performance of his duties, his familiarity with the working of the college, in all its details, and the aid in the management of affairs afforded by his experience and counsels, combined to make the chasm caused by his withdrawal such a one as could not easily be filled. The intimate personal relations which for years had subsisted between him and the president made the loss, to the latter, especially severe. Dr. Potter had been the vice-president of the college since 1838, and had, therefore, officially shared the responsibility and burdens of its government. His nature was sterner than that of Dr. Nott. He had a keen perception of what was due to correct discipline, and a resolute purpose to enforce it, when needed, without concession or compromise. Acting from his own strong sense of duty, alone, he might have drawn the reins somewhat too tightly, and been regarded as over-rigid and exacting. The college felt the benefit of this combination of the milder and sterner aspects of discipline which was the result of the joint counsels of its two highest presiding officers. Entire harmony, indeed, had marked their relations during all the years of this close connection. The esteem in which each held the other seemed to grow greater as time wore on, and in the case of Dr. Nott, who was beginning to feel sensibly the presence of advancing years, the support of the strong arm on which he had leaned became more and more important. Their connection with different religious denominations never impaired, in the least, the strength of their mutual confidence. And such was the value which Dr. Potter continued to set upon the practical sagacity and sound judgment of the venerated teacher he was now leaving, that he invoked their aid to enable him to meet and manage ecclesiastical difficulties which he supposed might arise in his new Episcopal charge. The following letter written, in answer to a request made by the new bishop, on the eve of his departure from Schenectady for his untried field of labor, furnishes its own commentary.

"UNION COLLEGE, October 5, 1845.

"MY DEAR SIR: You asked me, when parting, to write you in relation to my method of action where difficulties existed in churches, adding that you yourself would be called to act under such circumstances.

"1. As offences, and causes of offence, are so diverse in different places, and as every case has it own peculiar character, which can only be judged of on the spot, and in view of the special facts, I can only state some of the general principles that have governed me, and some of the modes of procedure which I have observed. First, then, to have influence in settling a difficulty, I have felt that I must be considered *impartial* in order to be useful; and that I might be so considered, I have resolutely determined *to be* so, not in appearance and in word merely (which is the case with many who assume the position of mediators), but in reality and in fact.

"2. I have gone directly to the party who sympathized the least with me, and, to the leader, or, in other words, the worst man, or the man of greatest influence in that party, endeavoring to come to terms with him, especially, and to induce him to bring to terms those with whom he acted. I have then pursued the same course with the opposite party.

"3. I have passed and repassed between the leader or leaders of the two factions, thus leading one side or the other, or both, to yield a little, till I have found some mean where they could unite.

"4. I have avoided bringing the parties together till everything was definitely settled, so that no discussion should be necessary if they should be required to meet; and, if they did meet, having previously arranged the business, I have endeavored to take the conducting of it, while the parties were together, into my own hands, and to do and talk so much myself, if possible, as to prevent either side from talking.

"5. In my intercourse with the two parties I have endeavored to bring a powerful religious influence to bear upon the minds of each, urging that it was better to give than to receive; that I should rather belong to the party that made concessions than to that which insisted that concessions should be made, and that the side with which I was then negotiating should study to see how much they could concede to their brethren, and not how much they could compel their brethren to give up to them.

"6. In this mutual intercourse, I have been careful to be the bearer only of the good which the one party might have said of the other in my hearing, and never the bearer of evil; thus exerting, as a common friend, a kindly influence to bring both sides into a better and more kindly frame of mind.

"7. As a preliminary to acting, I have endeavored to become acquainted with the condition of the parties, the real causes of grievance, and the real means and channels of influence. I have often found that other than the apparent grievances existed, and that great knowledge of all the circumstances of the case, as well as great delicacy on my part, together with much time and patience, were often called for.

"Your difficulties may result, not so much from local causes as from radical differences among the people of your extensive charge. With reference to this, being a member of a different church, I ought, perhaps, not to speak; still, such have been the peculiar relations in which we have stood to each other, and such is the interest I feel in your welfare and--may I not add?—in the good of every component part of the Church of Christ, that it may be pardonable in me to say something on even that delicate subject.

"Where there are party lines drawn in a church, especially where those lines are understood to be the boundary lines of principles esteemed important, no man holding a superintending station can maintain a perfect state of neutrality, nor can he assume to do it, without eventually losing the respect of both parties, and of the community itself; for, it is natural to respect men differing from us in principles more than men who are understood to have no principles at all.*

"But though a state of perfect neutrality is not to be attempted, and cannot be maintained, still, a man having his own principles and preferences, may exercise candor, liberality, and brotherly kindness toward them that differ from him; and, if he be at the same time a man of power and of place, he may do much, without compromising his duty, to calm the turbulence of passion, and to displace wrath and strife by the cultivation of brotherly love, with a general coöperation in saving souls and doing good.

"Your church has great advantages, and it is attended with great dangers. It possesses forms and ceremonies which, as aids to piety, may become great blessings, but the use of which brings along with it a constant temptation, especially in common minds, to trust in the form as an end, rather than to use it as a means. As standing between those that exact and those that disparage formularies and rites, a teacher may use them without joining in that disparagement or that exaltation (which would only offend the one party or the other, or probably make both worse), and while so doing always keep his own mind, and the mind of his audience, directed to the inward grace, in which all good people of both parties will sympathize, and, by having their minds so occupied, be sensibly drawn away to love the substance instead of disputing about the shadow.

"It seems to me that whatever good is to be done in bringing your church to peace and unity, is to be done by indirection; I mean, in respect to the outward matters in dispute. By being an affectionate and paternal governor of your church, and a zealous and faithful preacher of the Gospel; by endeavoring everywhere, instead of assailing other churches, to raise the standard of piety and cultivate a spirit of charity in your own, you will do more for the cause of God and man than can be done by any direct interference and polemical discussion of the questions which divide the people of your charge. In the providence of God, duty and interest are ever, in the long run, found to be united; and, I cannot but think that the ultra men who would sever themselves from the sympathies and charities of Protestant Christendom, misjudge as greatly with respect to the true interests of your church, especially in a country situated like our own, as they may err, perhaps, in the nature of saving faith and vital religion.

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* To some, Dr. Nott might seem here to be contradicting the rule he had before given in respect to impartiality. But neutrality is quite a different thing. A man may aim to be impartial, and be successful in the effort, without any affectation of an impossible neutrality, in respect to opinions deemed important.—T. L.

"If the covenanted mercies of God were confined to any outward form of ecclesiastical polity, those destitute of that form are to be pitied rather than reproached, and the way to win them would be to exhibit a kindly and fraternal spirit, rather than to prejudice them still more by asserting offensive claims, and indulging in angry rebuke

"Every position in life has its temptations and dangers. A bishop in your church, if a man of talents, is an agent of great power for good or evil; and it is generally said, it may be without much reason, that they are less humble and less wise and less charitable, after receiving this distinction than before. If this be the rule, I pray God that you may be the exception. It is difficult, I am aware, to possess great power and at the same time to use it benignly. But if the temptations of your place are strong, so are its responsibilities, and I would, by the grace of God, resolutely resist the one, and strive to feel the solemnity of the other. You may be an Episcopalian; that is your place; and you ought to bring your powers to bear upon that compartment of the church which God has committod to your charge; but there is no reason why you should not cherish good-will, and exercise all the charities of a common brotherhood toward him who occupies an adjoining ecclesiastical district, be he who he may, if you can regard him as a brother in Christ. I am aware that to flatter the pride, and favor the prejudices of a sect, is an easy way to acquire a sudden though narrow distinction—but it is one which a good man, and especially a good minister, would not wish to possess upon a bed of death, or to carry with him to the bar of judgment.

"Were it permitted me, however, to transfer an individual into your place, much as I should desire to see him cherish a catholic spirit toward other denominations, I should say to him, 'Your first and chief duty is to the people of your charge, and desirable as it may be to bring about a better state of feeling between your own and other denominations, you cannot do much, and must not attempt to do much, in that way, till you have made a lodgment in the affections and gained the confidence of those to whom you are called chiefly to minister.

"You ought, indeed, to give your countenance to every good work, and meet, whenever you can meet on common ground, those who differ from you in church polity—that is, you ought, as a man and Christian, to do this when you can do it and carry with you the approbation of those intrusted to your care. At present, perhaps, the only thing you can do is (in imitation of the venerable Bishop White, who still lives in the affections as well as memory of all good people), to unite with the friends of the Bible in giving that book, so dear to all Protestants, as wide a circulation as possible in this country and in the world.

"To such a course it will be difficult to object; since to this extent it has been taken by mitred heads on both sides of the Atlantic. On the other hand, such an act will, of itself, be received as a pledge against all leaning toward Rome, as well as one of sympathy with all the friends of the Bible in America. With these, as with all men, it is desirable that you should live in the exercise of good-will, and in the reciprocity of kind offices, as God shall give you opportunity so that your life shall be regarded as the life of a good man, as well as of an Episcopal bishop, and your tomb honored as the resting-place of a Christian, and not pointed at as containing the remains of a bigot.

"Mrs. Potter left us, with the children the day after you passed through. We are, through God's goodness, all well. Clarkson has commenced very well, and though he has some things still to learn, yet he has already learned something. Henry needs counsel, but seems well disposed to listen to it. I shall try to do my duty to these children, now more especially intrusted to me; the rest I commit to God. And that He may keep and guide and bless both you and them is the prayer of

"Yours, with great, affectionate esteem,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

This letter is altogether admirable for the comprehensive wisdom of its advice and counsel, for its enlightened views, for the liberal Christian spirit which it breathes, and for the frankness with which it admonishes an Episcopal prelate as to the sentiments he should cherish and the course he should hold in respect to evangelical bodies other than his own. The letter was received in a spirit kindred to that which prompted the recipient to ask advice and the writer to give it. The reply is couched in terms of equal frankness, and is so honorable to the character of both parties that it is a pleasure to place such a record before the reader's eye.

"PHILADELPHIA, November 26, 1845.

"MY DEAR SIR: I seize a moment which is spared before the messenger goes to Mr. Backus, to thank you for your letter of wise and valuable counsel which I received at Pittsburg. I have had occasion to test its wisdom in the adjustment of some very troublesome difficulties in two or three parishes on my route. I pray God I may have grace to profit by the whole of it, and never forget the modest, large-minded charity, which becomes all ministers of Christ.

"I have but just reached here from a journey of some twenty-five hundred miles, which supplied me with such incessant calls of an official nature, that I have not been able since to acknowledge your kindness ; and I have time now only to say, that I can never cease to cherish the gratitude and affection which I have long felt for you —and that I shall hope that neither time nor distance may ever prevent you from feeling that you are *at home* under my roof, and that you have upon me all the claims that any parent can have upon a child.

"With kindest remembrances to Mrs. N.,and the hope that we shall see you here in the spring, if not earlier,

"I am, dear sir,
" Ever affectionately yours,
"A. POTTER."

Dr. Nott had now reached the age of seventy-two, and had for forty-one years presided over the college. The retrospect of his work for this period must have been pleasant. Much had been achieved in placing the college upon a firm foundation, and in realizing the hopes which had cheered him when he first assumed the charge of its affairs. One by one the difficulties in the way of its endowment had been removed. The plans for its enlargement had been successfully carried out, its course of instruction had become more thorough, more comprehensive, and better adapted to meet the demands of the age, especially of those connected with practical life. Educational aids, in the shape of philosophical apparatus and other needed facilities, had been greatly increased. A full and able corps of instructors was associated with the president. The public confidence was attested by the increasing number of students, and the full classes that every year went forth from the institution. The history of the half century past seemed a pledge of success for the future—and the president, who had devoted his best years to such a purpose, might well look forward with confident anticipation to the higher successes which another like period might see it achieve.

The health of Dr. Nott had been good during all these years. Sickness had rarely occasioned any interruption of his labors. His manner of life was simple. He was frugal in his diet, almost abstemious. He ate very sparingly of animal food.* He was fond of fruits, of vegetables, and of milk, which formed an important article of his daily diet. He was regular in his hours of retiring and rising. By this regimen his health, which had been feeble when he first came to Schenectady, had been restored, and had remained firm, enabling him, without serious inconvenience to sustain the pressure which his manifold cares and engagements imposed upon him. In the fall of 1846, he visited his friend Rev. Dr. Tucker, then settled at Wethersfield, Connecticut, and preached for him. He became overheated by the service, and a sudden exposure to the sharp night air at its close brought on a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism. He was able after a time, to reach his home, but in a very feeble and crippled condition. The disease proved stubborn, and he suffered greatly. After a confinement of several weeks with but little alleviation of his suffering, he was induced to try the water-cure treatment, and for this purpose removed to the hydropathic establishment at Oyster Bay, Long Island. He found some benefit from the remedy, and returned home after an absence of two months, with health somewhat improved. It was a long time, however, before he recovered the use of his limbs. While his general strength increased, his legs and feet continued weak for many months; so that at the Commencement of 1847 it was necessary to carry him from his carriage into the church.

From this extreme disability he regained strength, so as to be able to walk with some comfort, though the perfect use of his limbs was never thereafter fully restored. His feet continued to trouble him, and his gait did not gain its old freedom and steadiness. Those who have been present at the college commencements during the last ten or twelve years in which he presided, will recall the aspect of the venerable president at the head of the procession when about entering the church, the appearance of pain as manifested on his countenance, and the seeming difficulty with which he walked. On these occasions many were specially attracted by the desire to see and hear him. During the last years of his administration, the desire seemed to grow stronger, and numbers of strangers besides the alumni of the college (some of them coming from far), formed part of the audience that ever crowded the church where the exercises were held. They came to look once more upon the face so well remembered, to listen to the tones of his loved voice—tones now tremulous with advancing years, but still distinct and clear as they breathed the anniversary prayer ; brief, indeed, but singularly comprehensive, touching, and appropriate. And then, at the close of the speaking, it was a rich sight to behold him conferring the degrees upon his expectant "sons," and with a grace, a dignity, and a tenderness hardly to be equalled or described, repeating the old Latin formularies that never became trite, or lost their freshness as they fell from his lips.

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* Appendix B.

These were memorable seasons, full of interest to the gathered multitude ; nor did it ever show the least abatement while Dr. Nott had strength to preside at a commencement. This chronic infirmity never reached his head. The voice failed, but the quick perception, the sound judgment, the capacity for vigorous and sustained mental exertion, remained long unimpaired. His stated professional duties were performed as fully and as well as they had been in his earlier years. The peculiar history of the college, and the peculiar means before adverted to, through which alone the legislative grants could be fully realized, required much outside labor, increasing, unfortunately, with his increasing years and infirmities. The trustees, in their unlimited confidence, regarded him as the only man capable of performing such services. This occasioned for him frequent and painful journeys abroad. In connection with these, moreover, his interest in the moral movements of the day continued unabated. The character of his activity in all measures of this kind will appear from a letter or two written about this period to his friend Mr. Delavan.

"UNION COLLEGE, December 22, 1847.

"DEAR SIR: Yours of the 22d is at hand. On its receipt, I wrote immediately to Dr. Wayland, who has my copy of Professor Stuart's letter, to return it immediately by express. I will then examine the letter, and suggest to Professor Stuart alterations in conformity to your wish.

"As Professor Stuart seems satisfied that his letter should appear first in the 'Inquirer,' I, too, am satisfied with that course. As to the introduction to which you allude, it will require to be written with great care. It must be impartial, comprehensive, yet brief; in the spirit of a lover of truth, and not as a controversialist. As to Mr. ——, it will not be wise for you to speak to him at present on the subject; the way is not yet prepared—and a premature attempt to influence him will only defeat the object. As to our friend ——, I may say that charity is not called forth by letter. Formal writing is too devoid of warmth to touch the heart. On subjects of that sort, we must approach those whom we hope to move, at the right time and face to face.

"I shall forward by express a subscription book, as you desire. I have seen ——, but not under circumstances in which I could introduce that subject. He promised to come to see me at my house, but has not yet fulfilled that engagement. I have no great confidence in this second-hand application, and yet I cannot but hope that the end in view will ultimately be attained.

"It is said that the Hon. Zadoc Pratt, of Prattsville, Greene county, is one of the men to whom you should apply, being rich, charitable and fond of patronizing public institutions. My health is slowly improving. Please present our affectionate regards to Mrs. Delavan and Mary, and believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

P.S.—As to commencing the improvements in Union College before the funds are fully provided for the completion of the same, I shall be governed very much by your opinion and wishes. It is as little my nature as yours to back out from an undertaking when once deliberately commenced and the design made public. If Providence smile upon us, our reputation as men of foresight is implicated in the transaction; and I shall be as reluctant as you will be, to have it said that we commenced, and were unable to complete, a work confessedly of great public importance to the present and future generations.

"We have been identified for years with the furtherance of the temperance enterprise. Though difficulties have met us, we have not faltered; and now, having undertaken to execute another great public work, we shall, I trust, not falter, till, by the blessing of God, the same is completed.—E. N."

Another letter to Mr. Delavan, written in the same month and in reference partly to a matter touched upon in the foregoing, is in these words:

"UNION COLLEGE, December 31, 1847.

"DEAR SIR: This letter will be accompanied by one of the subscription books, as you desire. I have sent, as I informed you, for my copy of Professor Stuart's letter, but the manuscript has not yet come to hand. When it does, I shall prepare a few notes for Dr. Stuart in relation to it, and request him, in conformity to your wish, to transmit the corrected copy to yourself at New York. When your preliminary remarks reach me, I will communicate my opinion concerning the same.

"I received a fine keg of grapes on Christmas day. No intimation from whom they came accompanied them. I must be indebted, therefore, to some friend in New York, and if you know who that friend is, I wish you to make to him my acknowledgments. The grapes were the best I ever saw, and they came very opportunely, as I am yet an invalid and confined to a narrow circle of aliments.

"I am trying to learn to bear affliction gratefully. I find it a hard lesson to learn, but hope I have made some progress. My confinement during the last autumn has been a severe trial, and should I be taught by it to love earth less and heaven more, *all will be well.* He must have great grace who can bear continual prosperity, and our Heavenly Father knows when afflictions are necessary. With affectionate regards to your family,

"I remain, yours truly,
"ELIPHALET NOTT."

In the following month there was written to the same gentleman another letter connected with the temperance movement, in which both had been for years so closely associated. The agitation of the public mind that is spoken of refers to the effects of the sharp discussion then going on concerning the use of wine, especially at the communion table.

"UNION COLLEGE, January 14, 1848.

"DEAR SIR: I received a letter from Professor Stuart this day. He acknowledges the receipt of his manuscript, and of my accompanying letter. He says he has adopted all my proposed amendments and requests me to write a brief introductory statement of the manner in which he became engaged in this discussion. He said, if I did not, that he should write such an article himself, and forward it to you. He requested me also to inform you whether I would do it. I have concluded not to write, for the reason that I have myself forgotten the circumstances, and for the further reason that Professor Stuart can himself state the circumstances of such engagement better than any one else. I am, moreover, unwell and unable to write. With kind regards to Mrs. D. and Mary,

"I am, in haste, yours truly,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

"P.S.—Since writing the above, yours of the 12th has come to hand. I am glad that you have concluded not to send your letter to Syracuse. The public mind is not in a state now to listen to the voice of reason. Passion and prejudice are predominant; a storm is brewing which is not to be met or directed by argument. The only way for prudent men is to wait till it has passed by and spent its fury. The calm of reason will ultimately return, and in the meantime there is nothing to do but to wait and trust in God.

"I cannot tell what you would desire to say in relation to the past. If you will forward an outline, I will review it and give you my opinion. In my judgment, if anything is said for Europe, it ought to be said separately, and in a communication for some foreign journal. However ignorant foreigners may be of the origin or cause of this discussion in America, it is sufficiently understood here; and I cannot see that any advantage would arise, in an attempt to correct, in this country, mistakes made abroad, but of which the public here are generally ignorant.—E. N."

In the four or five years following the college semicentennial in 1845, nothing occurred in the affairs of the institution, as connected with Dr. Nott, of sufficient moment to deserve special mention. The work of the college went forward smoothly, and was attended still with gratifying success. College life and its round of duties have, in themselves, little that is stirring or eventful. Save those last given, there are to be found no letters of Dr. Nott, that might be used to illustrate this period of his literary life. A matter, however, of moment to himself, and to the college as well, was just now brought into prominent notice, and under circumstances commanding the attention of all who felt an interest in the affairs of the institution. Reference is had to a financial controversy between Dr. Nott and a prominent member of the New York Senate, commencing in the year 1849. Occasion was given to it by the complicated pecuniary transactions arising out of the lotteries before mentioned. As has been stated, they had been long in drawing. To secure the interests of Union, Dr. Nott, at much personal expense and hazard to himself and his friends, had bought out the claims of the other institutions named in said grants. Large profits had been made by the managers appointed. These were over and above the direct sums specified as given by the State to the college, all of which had been fully realized and accounted for. Of these extra profits, thus made by the managers, Dr. Nott claimed a large portion, and obtained them by a suit at law. Without his own personal exertions, given at great cost, they would never have had existence. They therefore belonged legally to himself; but he never had a thought of any other disposition of them than for the promotion of the one object for which he lived. To this end transfers and investments were made, with the vote and sanction of the trustees, who always acted in perfect harmony with Dr. Nott in all these transactions. As the actual creator of this fund, he simply claimed that a distinction should be made in the two classes of accounts which he thus controlled in two distinct capacities, as president of the college responsible for the State grants, and as the individual who had rescued for the institution, large sums from the exorbitant claims and profits of the lottery managers. This state of things, wholly misunderstood, was made the ground of attack in the manner before mentioned. Legislative committees were appointed. A long and rigorous investigation took place, the results of which were his triumphant vindication, and the hearty acquiescence of the public sentiment. Financial statements would be out of place here. The reader is, therefore, referred to more particular details as they are given in the Appendix,* together with a special statement, or summing, of the case made in the "New York Times" of the day, by its lamented editor, the Hon. Henry J. Raymond. The great trouble it occasioned to Dr. Nott, amid his other pressing cares, and the satisfaction of all his friends in the result, constitute the essential facts which alone give it a place and an interest in this biography.

* Appendix C.

CHAPTER XXII.

LETTERS—SEMICENTENNIAL OF DR. NOTT'S PRESIDENCY.

Letter to Commodoro Stockton on Flogging in the Navy—Letter of congratulation to President Wayland—Semicentennial of Dr. Nott's Presidency—Great Gathering of Alumni—Address by Judge Campbell—Address by President Wayland—Dr. Nott's Valedictory—Extracts—Its impressive close—Alumni Meeting—Resolutions.

THE interest taken by Dr. Nott in every enterprise or movement aiming to mitigate suffering, raise man to his proper position, and promote, in general, the good of humanity, is shown in the following letter written about this time, to Commodore Stockton. An effort was making to restore the custom of flogging in the navy. The letter is a protest against it, and was prompted by the deep abhorrence with which the writer viewed this "barbarous practice," as he fitly terms it. It was this deep feeling that led him to volunteer such aid as his name and influence might give to the men who were struggling manfully to keep the nation free from a stigma which, for so many years, had rested upon it.

"COMMODORE STOCKTON—SIR: Right actions carry with them their own reward. Self-sustained as you must be in the noble stand you have taken against dishonoring the nation by giving the sanction of its Senate to the restoration of the barbarous practice of flogging in the navy, you can be in no need of support from abroad to induce you to maintain that stand.

"Still, I feel constrained, in behalf of our common humanity, to express my grateful acknowledgments to you for the past, and to tender you, for the future, whatever of encouragement my entire approbation can afford.

"It is humiliating to learn that, among the representatives of a free people there can be found men willing to degrade our naval commanders, by again making the cat the symbol of their authority, and to brutalize the seamen they command, by making the dread of it the motive to obedience.

"What may be true of tars, whose spirit has been broken down and whose better feelings have been extinguished by the discipline of the lash, I know not; but sure I am that among those not thus debased, there are other and nobler and more effective principles of action, that may be appealed to for securing obedience, for the endurance of suffering, and the performance of deeds of glory.

"It is not befitting that men and brutes should be governed alike. There is a more reliable foundation for authority than fear, and a more powerful incentive to obedience than dread of bodily pain.

"Sailors are proverbially generous* and brave; and, separated as they are while on shipboard from the rest of mankind, everything favors the establishment of an unlimited control over them by their commander, if that commander be himself brave, kind, and paternal. . . . .

"Again would I express to you my acknowledgment of the noble service you are doing to the cause of humanity, and my earnest wish for your success.

"Very respectfully yours,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

A letter, kindred to the foregoing in tone and spirit, and breathing, like it, an ardent love for the oppressed, for the cause of human rights and of individual freedom, is addressed to his friend President Wayland. The occasion that drew it forth was the receipt of a printed copy of a speech delivered by Dr. Wayland, before the citizens of Providence,

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* Dr. Nott's strong common sense always kept him at a far remove from any mere romantic sentimentalism, although he was a philanthropist in the truest acceptation of this much-abused term. He had, however, a hearty love for seamen, so strongly shown in his efforts to extend to them the benefits of the temperance reformation, as he had also much faith in the common ascription to them of a generous and heroic character induced by the perils to which they are exposed. At the time when this letter was written, such was the current sentiment. There can be no doubt, nevertheless, that a great change has since taken place in the character of the men who compose our marine service, especially the commercial. Various reasons may be assigned for this—changes in the mode of navigation, changes in the general morality of business, or as arising from the cupidity of competition. Of the sad fact, however—for it is a sad one—there is overwhelming evidence in the accounts of crime and calamity that fill our newpapers.—T. L.

Rhode Island, on the "Nebraska Bill," then pending in the National Congress.

"UNION COLLEGE, March 21, 1854.

"MY SON: Mrs. Nott has finished reading to me your late speech in favor of our common humanity, and I have sent the paper that contained it to our printer. It is a noble speech, worthy of the Baptist denomination, and worthy of the State—small in territorial dimensions but great in its influence on the destinies of man—where religious as well as civil liberty was first promulgated.

"Whether it will have any affect I know not, for I know not whether God, in mercy, will prevent the judgment we are striving to inflict on ourselves, or suffer us to be accursed to the extent of our devisings. I do not know that we are worthy to be saved from self-destruction. No sorer judgment could be devised for any portion of any country than domestic slavery, and the suffering of that fearful incubus to be imposed on a young fertile country is a very appropriate punishment for the crime of devising it.

"If God has good in store for this country the bill will be arrested; if evil, it will pass. I see you do not value union so much as you do freedom.

"If slavery is to be indefinitely extended, it were better to be out of the Union than in it. The event is in God's hand, and we, having borne our testimony, can only say, 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach' and destruction.

"Yours truly,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

The Commencement of this year 1854 was marked by an event without a parallel in the history of American colleges. It was the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Dr. Nott's presidency. Action had been taken by the Board of Trustees, at the commencement reunion of the year before, having reference to this extraordinary occasion. It was, in the following form: "*Resolved,* That we earnestly request all the graduates of Union College to meet us at the next Annual Commencement, and unite in congratulations to Dr. Nott at the then close of fifty years since he entered on his duties as president, and to rejoice with him and with us in the prosperity of this institution, to the advancement of which he has so successfully devoted the energies of a great mind, for the unexampled period of half a century." In accordance with the spirit of this resolution, suitable arrangements were made for observing the anniversary in question in a manner becoming its unprecedented character. Special invitations were sent to the numerous alumni of the college, and the nature of the approaching celebration made it well-nigh certain that these would gather in unwonted numbers. The fact proved to be as predicted. A host of the former graduates, from all parts of the country, presented themselves, sufficient alone to fill the capacious Presbyterian Church where the exercises were held. The desire to look again upon the face, and hear the voice, of the veteran "guide, philosopher, and friend," who had instructed their youth and pointed out the way to usefulness and honor, attracted many alumni from afar, who, till this memorable day, had not revisited the halls of their Alma Mater since graduating from them years before.

The exercises were begun with prayer by the Rev. Mark Tucker, D. D., of the class of 1814; after which the opening address was delivered by the Hon. W. W. Campbell, who had graduated in 1827, and was now a member of the board of trustees. He gave a clear, succinct, and highly interesting account of the past history of the college, tracing it from its feeble beginning to its then vigorous maturity and prosperous condition, showing how effective had been the half century of Dr. Nott's unwearied labor and devoted zeal in producing the prosperity in which the friends of the college then rejoiced. He was followed by the Rev. Dr. Wayland, of the class of 1813, president of Brown University. The subject of his address was, "The System of Collegiate Education in our Age and Country." It was a thoughtful and scholarly production, presenting broad and comprehensive views of the great educational problem, sharply discriminating the false from the true, as well in theory as in practice, and given with a tone of emphasis and authority appropriate in one distinguished as an educator by long experience and high success. In the closing part of this discourse the speaker refers in these touching terms to the venerable president of the college, who, during its delivery, had been occupying a seat behind him upon the platform:

> "You all perceive that the line of remark which I have here pursued, has been suggested by the circumstances of the present memorable occasion. An aged man, the Nestor of American teachers, finds himself this day surrounded by pupils who have assembled from every State in our Union, to offer him their filial congratulations. An officer of instruction, who has, for half a century, presided over a most flourishing seat of learning, is here met by the thousands who have returned to the home of their education, to declare that whatever of success they have achieved in their several professions, has been greatly owing to the wisdom of his precepts and the purity of his example. A benignant Providence has spared that honored life, and crowned those labors with triumphant success; and now, a whole community, uttering the voice of humanity, has assembled to bow in grateful reverence before that hoary head, which, for half a century, has been encircled with the wreath of profound learning, matchless sagacity, unwearied benevolence, surpassing eloquence, and childlike piety. The youth and the age of the present seem here to unite with the coming generations of the future, and shower on the head of that 'old man eloquent' their heartiest benedictions.
>
> "Venerable man! We rejoice to see that thine eye is not dim, though thy natural force is abated by years. We thank you for your care over our youth; we thank you for those counsels which have so often guided our manhood; we thank you for that example which has ever so clearly pointed out to us the path of earnest duty and self-forgetful charity. Long may you yet live to witness the happiness which you have created, and cherish the genius which your inspirations first awakened to conscious existence. And, when the Saviour, in whose footsteps thou hast trodden, shall call thee home to receive thy reward, may death lay his hand gently on that venerated form, and gently quiet the pulsations of that noble heart. May thy fainting head recline upon the bosom of the Redeemer whom thou hast loved; may thine eye open upon visions of glory which man may not utter; and so may an entrance be abundantly administered to thee into the joy of thy Lord."

The exercises of the morning closed with Dr. Wayland's address. At two o'clock in the afternoon the audience, in increasing numbers, assembled to be present at what was the great feature of the anniversary, the address of the venerable president of the college. To hear this, the greatest curiosity and eagerness were shown, not only by the assembled alumni, but by the citizens of Schenectady and surrounding places, who, at an early hour, occupied every available foot of room that the spacious church afforded. No speaker could wish to greet a more deeply attentive audience, or one in more absolute sympathy with himself. Dr. Nott was now eighty-one years old, and among his "sons" now gathered before him were numbers who, having graduated in the first years of his presidency, had reached their threescore years and ten. Time had set its seal upon him visibly. His locks were white as snow. His gait had grown feeble, feebler indeed than it would have been but for the rheumatic seizure of several years before, so that he walked now with difficulty. His face, within a few years, had grown more full of lines and furrows. His frame was thinner, his carriage less erect, and his general appearance that of a man on whom years were working their accustomed changes. His eye, however, was still bright with its wonted expression, and his voice, though less strong than in other days, was yet clear and distinct, so that few, in the stilled and expectant audience, failed fully to apprehend his lowest-toned enunciations. His address, which was somewhat over an hour long, showed no sign of mental decay. It was given memoriter, as his life-long custom had been, and characterized in the delivery by an easy, graceful fluency, in which no auditor could detect the slightest hesitation, or effort to recall a sentence or a word. There were passages in it worthy to rank with the productions of his palmier days, while as a whole, in its scope and arrangement, in its breadth of view and liberal spirit, in beauty and force of expression, in tenderness of suggestion and appeal, and in its fitness to the occasion, it well deserves to be regarded as a remarkable effort. Such certainly was the feeling of all who were present at its delivery. A few paragraphs from this address will show its character, and the deep interest it had for the audience, listening to it under such peculiar circumstances.

After an impressive survey of the changes which he had witnessed within half a century, in the city where they were assembled, in the college and its surroundings, in the peopling of the western wilderness, in the facilities of rapid locomotion and spread of intelligence, he passed to the benefits produced by them as now enjoyed by the masses of society. He pointed to what art and invention had achieved for the promotion of comfort, the saving of labor, and the bettering of man's condition. He referred to the power-loom and spinning-jenny, to "the employment of fire and steam and lightning and sunbeams, in carrying forward those processes which the wants of the world require," and by "substituting elemental for muscular power," increasing man's resources and adding as well to his enjoyment. He then descanted on the effect produced by education on public opinion, and showed how, as that opinion became more and more "enlightened by science and sanctified by grace," its power must become increasingly beneficent to man. In regard to this public opinion, thus educated, he says:

> "Already, at its bidding, has the common school system been adopted, and the school-master commissioned to instruct, with one humiliating exception, the children of all races.
>
> "Within the same half century, public opinion has improved as well as extended our educational systems. In the common school, the rod and the ferule have been exchanged for the plaudit and the premium. The school-house, rendered alluring by charts, and maps, and apparatus, has ceased to be a prison. Study, in place of being a task coerced by the lash, has become a privilege. As auxiliary to the free school, the free press, with its trained corps of editors and reporters and printers, is sending forth daily its magnificent sheets, the vehicles of intelligence, of learning and eloquence, of morals and religion, and scattering them broadcast, with a rapidity and over an extent of country that would have seemed incredible in former days. The college also, liberalized and adapted to the wants of a

young country and a progressive age, invites our youth to its consecrated halls. Last, though not least, the church, reared not by tribute extorted from the tax-gatherer, but by the free-will offering of grateful hearts, stands pointing by its spires the eye of the beholder heavenward during the week days, and inviting with open door the whole population to the worship of Jehovah on the Sabbath.

"Surely our lines have fallen in pleasant places, we have a goodly heritage. . . . . . But where are the actors in these scenes of glory? — the men who achieved these semicentennial triumphs, especially those of our own State? There rise before me the imperishable memories of Jay, of Clinton, of Hamilton. I think of the stern and incorruptible Spencer, the erudite, guileless Kent, the eloquent and persuasive Van Ness? There crowd upon my thoughts the inventors, and the patrons of inventors, the liberal and enlightened Livingston, the ingenious and successful Fulton? Nor can I pass without mention the unhonored and forgotten Fitch, the real author of steamboat navigation?

"Imagination brings again, in forms of living reality, the men who presided over this institution in its early infancy, the devout and impassioned Smith, the acute and polemic Edwards, the elegant and accomplished Maxcy? I think of the teachers, some of them my predecessors, and others associated with me in faculty meetings long years ago: the faithful Van Der Heuvel, the beloved Taylor, the devoted Yates, the learned Allen, the venerated Davis.

"My thoughts go back to the men that constituted its early board of trustees: Van Rensselaer and Banyar and Henry, and Oothout and Yates and Duane. Again do I hold intercourse with Romeyn and Coe and Blatchford and Proudfit—venerable names. Gone—all gone; and I stand here alone to-day among you, beloved pupils, the last remaining relic of a former age, as the leafless, storm-stricken forest tree stands amid trees of younger growth, breasting the storm and rejoicing in their strength.

"But though I stand thus, and though saddening reminiscences force themselves on the mind, the present gathering is rather an occasion of joy than sorrow.

"From the long, expensive, and painful ordeal through which the college has been compelled to pass, it has come forth with ample means of usefulness and an unsullied reputation. Thankful for the fidelity of friends, especially thankful to that generous, intrepid, and untiring advocate, who, unsolicited and without the promise or prospect of reward, devoted for so long a time the whole energy of his powerful mind to the unravelling of that triple web of misplaced facts, *unfounded statements*, and false reasoning, which, with such untiring assiduity, misguided men had been weaving;* above all, thankful to God, that the lives of so many of those best acquainted with the facts have been spared, till, in his good providence, the truth has been made apparent and the victory won; thankful for this, let us forgive and forget the past. Let us cherish the hope that the grievous injustice we have suffered has been the result of misapprehension, rather than of malice ; let us exercise only good-will toward those who have done us wrong, Forgiveness befits creatures who themselves must ask of God forgiveness, To forgive is but to anticipate that frame of mind in which we must all desire that death should find us, that so we may leave the world as Christians ought to leave it, at peace with God, and in charity with all."

The claims of society upon educated men, and the duty devolving upon them to devote the superior power and influence derived from education, each in his own sphere, in doing good to their fellow men, and advancing to the utmost their moral and material interests, are eloquently urged in the following exhortation :

"Having been permitted, on this jubilee, to share the pleasures of reviewing the glorious triumphs of the past, and being summoned, in the providence of God, to take part in hastening forward the still more glorious triumphs of the future, who of you will not respond to the summons, and, buckling on his armor, form, ere you separate, the high resolves to go hence to do battle for your country, your race, and your God?

"Go then—explain the laws of life and administer remedies to the sufferer. Go, reform the moralities of the bar, defend the defenceless, vindicate the right, and strip from guilt its covering. Go, expound the law in righteousness, and sustain the majesty of government on the bench. Regardless of commendation or of censure, and scorning the traitor's bribe, seek your country's good and only your country's good, in the Senate chamber. Go, charm down the spirit of party, and heal the divisions in Christ's rent church. Go, kindle a holier zeal, and cherish a more fraternal spirit among her divided ministry.

"Next to religion, and as auxiliary to it, favor the cause of science.

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* The reference here is to the controversy mentioned in the close of Chapter XXI. The advocate to whose labors Dr. Nott was chiefly indebted for his triumphant vindication was the Hon. John C. Spencer. See Appendix.

That is a mistaken view which frowns on the study of nature lest its teachings should contradict the teachings of revelation. Truth is no less truth, when revealed in sunbeams from the firmament above, or exhumed from darkness amid the folds of the fossiliferous rocks below, than when it appears on the written pages of the inspired Word. Wherever God teaches, it cannot be profane for man to learn.

"No matter how far around the telescope extends the astronomer's field of vision, the field of God's omnipresence extends to infinitude beyond it. No matter how far back the geologist may trace this world's unwritten history; back of that epoch, there still remains untraced the unwritten history of God's past eternity. No matter how minute the atoms, or contracted the compartments the microscope discovers in its descent, it will reveal no atoms too minute for God to see, or compartments too narrow for God to work in. No matter in what direction or to what extent inquiries after truth are prosecuted, from each the answer returned will be the same. From the strata imbedded in the depths of the earth; from the flowers blossoming on its surface, as well as from the suns that burn, and the stars that glitter in the firmament above, a voice, everywhere alike, is heard to say, 'God is here, and here, and here.' Worlds which He made and governs are surely fit text-books for man to study.

"It was the fool that said 'There is no God!' It is still the fool that repeats that saying. Neither astronomy nor geology can exist without God. It is as absurd to base our rocks, as our hopes, upon nothing." . . . .

The space occupied by the foregoing extracts will only permit to be further introduced the deeply tender and affectionate closing words of this address:

"Having been permitted to meet, as, after a long absence, children meet at the paternal home, to exchange the fraternal salutation, to receive the paternal benediction, to present before God's mercy-seat grateful acknowledgments for the mercies of the past, and implore His blessing for the future, let us return rejoicing to resume life's cares, to endure life's sorrows, to perform life's duties; and, graving still deeper the impression we wish to leave on this world's tablet, let us strive the more earnestly to secure the enrolment of our names in the Lamb's Book of Life. Forewarned as we are, by the death-starred names on the catalogue, of those thinned classes represented here to-day, that time is short and death certain, let us hereafter cancel the current claims of life as they present themselves, meet the daily and hourly duties as they arise, and strike with every setting sun the balance of this world's account; that come that dread destroyer when he may, and however unexpectedly, he may find us ready and waiting for the summons.

"In the meantime, and since for repentant sinners there is hope beyond the grave, let us who possess this hope—and why, since grace is free, should we not all possess it?—console ourselves and comfort one another with these cheering words. 'We shall meet again.' Yes, Christians, thanks to redeeming love, we shall meet again—meet around the Redeemer's throne, to receive His welcome, to behold His glory, to speak His praises, and lay the willing honors of our creation and redemption at His feet. Till then, farewell—a last, a long, but not a sad farewell."

Following this address a meeting of the Alumni was organized in the church, at which the Right Reverend George Upfold, Bishop of Indiana, of the class of 1814, was called to preside. Pertinent and feeling addresses were made by several eminent sons of the college, which, besides expressing the personal obligations of the speakers to their venerated teacher, and the benefits the college had reaped from his long connection with it, set forth the wide and beneficent influence his life and services had exerted on social progress, true morality, and the well-being of society at large. Space will not allow even an abstract of the remarks made to be given. The sentiment of the entire body of the Alumni was expressed in the following resolution, offered by Judge Amasa J. Parker, of the class of 1815, and passed with enthusiastic acclamations.

"*Resolved*, By the Alumni here assembled, That we tender to Dr. Nott our most respectful and heart-felt congratulations on this epoch in his life. We congratulate him on the unprecedented period of half a century, during which he has presided over this college, and in which, under his wise adminstration, it has grown from the acorn of 1804, to the wide-spreading oak of 1854; we congratulate him on the manifold contributions to literature, science, and religion, which Union College has sent forth during these fifty years; we congratulate him on his triumph over the recent attacks upon him, for, though from the very first, we were well assured of the result, yet we could not know the unparalleled munificence which it was to reveal; and lastly, we congratulate him on the affection and admiration which he so wonderfully inspires in all those who have ever sat at his feet, and of which our presence here is a proof, as well as an expression of our hope to return for many succeeding years to renew these our congratulations.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COLLEGE LIFE—LETTERS OF FRIENDSHIP AND SYMPATHY.

Dr. Nott still at his post—Vice-President Hickok—Importance of his position and services—Deep interest taken by Dr. Nott in the college—The Alumni Hall—Temperance labors in his old age—Address before the State Temperance Society, at the age of eighty-two—Letter to Mr. Delavan—To Dr. Warner concerning an inebriate asylum—Letters to friends in bereavement—On Christian Communion—Deepening earnestness in religion—A peace-maker—Account of him by Dr. Van Vechten—By Dr. Backus.

FOR the six years succeeding the semicentennial, that is up to 1860, when the weight of increasing infirmities partially withdrew Dr. Nott from his former active participation in the affairs of the college, but few incidents of special moment occurred to vary the even tenor of his life. He instructed his classes as usual, was present at the meetings of the faculty, presided at the commencements, and took a deep interest in objects designed to benefit his beloved college or to promote the interests of the young men who resorted to it. He had the satisfaction of seeing the college continue prosperous, the numbers in regular attendance, and those graduating at the close of their course, keeping fully up to the mark reached during many previous years. He was supported by an efficient corps of instructors, the most of whom were graduates of the institution, possessed his confidence, and were in full sympathy with him. The college had had the good fortune to secure the services of the Rev. Laurens P. Hickok, D. D., as its vice-president, who, in addition to this office, filled the chair of Mental and Moral Science. He had graduated from Union College in 1820, and after completing his theological studies, had been in the pastoral work, mainly in Litchfield, Connecticut, till 1836. He was then chosen Professor of Theology in the Western Reserve College, Ohio, whence he was called to occupy a similar position in Auburn Theological Seminary. From this latter field, which he found a wholly congenial one, and where his labors were highly successful, he was invited to Schenectady in 1852. He came to the college with a high reputation as a metaphysician, a scholar, a divine, and a teacher. He was a man of indomitable industry, earnest purpose, frank address, transparent candor, and of exemplary Christian character. His stalwart frame and robust health enabled him to bear easily whatever burdens were laid upon him, and thus, as the associate of Dr. Nott, to lighten those from which the latter, with waning physical powers, found frequent need of being relieved. It was an important thing for President Nott to have so strong and true an arm to lean upon, and to be able to roll off upon it, without uneasiness, a load of care and responsibility, which failing strength made him less and less adequate to sustain. Dr. Hickok became, accordingly, the acting president of the college, during several of the last years of Dr. Nott's life, performing even before the latter was wholly disabled from the regular discharge of his wonted work, occasional services, which the circumstances of the office demanded, and rendering them with promptness, fulness, and fidelity.

Dr. Nott's interest in everything calculated to elevate the college, and to make it subserve more fully the liberal ends had in view by its founders, continued unabated. According to the original plans of the college edifices, it was designed to have the whole intervening space between the two main buildings, filled up with a line of structures, in the rear, of a semicircular form, and linking the two together. The central edifice was to be devoted to the purposes of chapel, alumni hall, library, etc. The lack of funds prevented Dr. Nott from witnessing the carrying out of this plan, or even the completion of the central edifice, the first step toward the work, as originally designed. He saw only the laying of the corner-stone of this building, in the ceremonies attending which he had the happiness of taking a part. Those who were present on this interesting occasion will recall the deep satisfaction with which the aged president spoke of the realization, thus far, of the long-deferred wishes of many years, and how hopefully he now looked forward to the completion of what, after so many disheartening obstacles, was at length actually begun. The longed-for building, however, was not destined, during his life, to rise higher than the foundations. It has risen since, and now, ten years after his death, is nearly completed. It is an imposing structure, standing forth as the fitting monument of the man whose name, character, and services it will serve to perpetuate. It is worthy to be noted, too, that though Dr. Nott failed to see the completion of this edifice, it should be finished while one of his own grandsons was filling the place in the college which he himself so long occupied, and that two others of his grandsons should be the enterprising patrons through whose munificence the long-desired and important work should at last be accomplished.*

While showing such deep interest at this advanced stage of his life-journey, in promoting every project which aimed to strengthen and extend the influence of the college, he was not less heartily engaged in benevolent effort for the moral improvement of man. The cause of temperance especially, continued as dear to him as ever. His labors were as earnest to stay the devastating tide which was sweeping away the substance, health, hopes, and prospects of such multitudes all over the land. His sage counsels were given to all who sought, or might be influenced by them, as freely as they had been before his activity had experienced any decline. The question of legal prohibition of the sale of intoxicating drinks was now prominently before the public. Dr. Nott held, as he had always held, that prohibition was impossible without proper education of the masses to enforce it, and was opposed, as he had ever been, to mixing temperance with politics, or making the temperance cause in any way a political engine. He thus writes to Mr. Delavan, with whom he had long coöperated in the temperance work, and whose occasional excessive zeal he found it necessary, at times, to temper with his own far-sighted conservatism.

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* "The Rev. Eliphalet Nott Potter, D. D., the present popular and efficient president of Union College, was elected to this office in 1872, succeeding the Rev. Dr. Aiken, who was elected in 1869, and resigned the office in 1871. The Rev. Dr. Hickok, who had been vice-president of the college for fourteen years, succeeded Dr. Nott in the presidency in 1866. The Hon. Clarkson N. Potter, and Howard Potter, Esq., by a contribution of $20,000 made by each to the Alumni Hall, guarantied the completion of the long-deferred work.

"UNION COLLEGE, May 22, 1855.

"DEAR SIR: I enclose your manuscript entire, having suggested a few verbal alterations of little consequence, because I doubt whether you will approve of the abbreviations and alterations I have made in the copy. What you say on the third page I have altered so as not to make you suggest a change in the policy. This I did, first, because the existing policy is the wise policy; second, because they will change it whether you advise it or not—revolutions never go backward.

"I have softened what you say about not voting for a person who is not a teetotaller. It may be right, but not necessarily so; the doctrine is not, in the abstract, sound; and, though it were, it would be bad logic to enforce it by the example of the politicians and rum-sellers. Christians, and even teetotallers ought to have in view more worthy models.

"I have not alluded to opposition to you, or your deeds, and I have not let you make yourself so blameless as your draft; first, because I do not believe all you say about yourself, though you do; and second, because if you have acted half as well as you say, you need no protestations in your own favor. I have shortened merely what you say about resigning, for the purpose of having your piece short.

"Yours truly,

"E. NOTT."

In a letter written not long after to the same party, the same subject is touched upon in referring to a printed letter of Hon. Gerrit Smith, favoring absolute prohibition:

"UNION COLLEGE, September 17, 1855.

"DEAR SIR: I have read Mr. Gerrit Smith's letter. It is marked with his accustomed and distinguished characteristics—and, under a despotic government, the reasoning would be conclusive. Here the governed are the governors, and to secure the enactment and the maintenance of good laws, the law-givers must first be educated.

"I leave home Thursday night in the steamboat; shall be absent one week, and shall wish to see you when I return. Great wisdom is required at the present crisis. When steps are taken in obedience to God's commands, consequences are not to be taken into the account. Not so when taken in obedience to man's reasoning. To err is human, and, under a conviction of this truth, in times of danger, every step must be taken with reserve and caution. This I know you are disposed to do. I shall reflect on all that you have said, and make up my mind before I see you,

"Yours truly,

"E. NOTT."

His views in regard to the necessity of educating public opinion in order to secure the maintenance and enforcement of prohibitory laws, were decided and undeviating. He expressed them publicly as well as in private correspondence. He attended and spoke at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the New York State Temperance Society, held on the evening of the 26th of January, 1856, in the Assembly chamber at Albany. His appearance on that occasion is thus described by one of the papers published in that city:

"Beyond all question the most beloved and honored instructor of youth in the American Republic, and now at the advanced age of eighty-three, his form was no sooner seen, leaning on the arm of the President of the Society, and advancing to the Speaker's platform, than both the galleries and the body of the house were sensibly touched with emotion, and joined in a round of plaudits in his honor."

From his address on this occasion, the following passage is taken, to illustrate his position on the prohibitory question, which was then one of exciting interest. After picturing the triumph that should ultimately reward those who were then toiling amid discouragements, he says:

"But how are these progressive triumphs to be accomplished, this final victory achieved? How? By the force of public opinion—settled, decided public opinion—and such public opinion embodied and expressed in the form of authoritative public law, thus embodied and and expressed as fast, and as far as formed.

"Let not this partial want of success, however, dishearten us. Ours is an agency of mercy; it has accomplished much of good in the past, it is full of promise for the future. And, be it remembered for our encouragement and future guidance, that no beneficial changes in the social condition of any people is ever effected suddenly. In place of being dismayed or weary in well-doing, let us betake ourselves with increased energy to our appointed task, always confident that 'we shall reap if we faint not.'

"And we shall reap if we faint not. Even though the law of Prohibition fail us, we can fall back on the law of kindness, resuming our former weapons of light and love, weapons of heavenly temper and of heavenly origin, and in their use return hereafter, as heretofore, to win new fields of glory; so that should we be denied for a season the power of closing the bar-room by force, we shall not be denied the happiness of continuing our efforts to close it by persuasion. We shall have the still higher happiness of appealing to its keeper as a man and a brother, and of assuring him that in our assault on his occupation, we seek not his injury, but his good only; that there are other and better occupations, better for himself, better for his family, better for his country, better for time, better for eternity—some of which on his death-bed he will rejoice to have chosen."

The following letter, without date, was written at a period somewhat later, when the temperance party, as a political party, having failed in the effort to carry prohibition at the polls, had in consequence become discouraged, and in some measure disorganized.

"DEAR SIR: I send you a sketch of what, though true, it may not be time for any one to say. And it is very likely that even you have used the term, 'prohibition' too long to come to use the terms 'restriction' and 'regulation.' And yet this is all that is attempted by any prohibitory law. As to a license law, I am not aware that any such law has been passed. It is said we temperance people want to prescribe what other people may eat and drink. Not so. They can eat poison and drink it, if they choose. All we ask is that they shall not procure, and expose it for sale, to corrupt our children, enervate our laborers, make paupers for us to support and criminals for whom we are to build prisons—than which demand nothing can be more reasonable. I know democrats are jealous of their rights, but when we come to be understood, it will be seen that we do not wish to interfere with other people's rights, nor do we wish them to interfere with ours. But the temperance effort must be suspended. There must be a pause, and much of the past forgotten, before the scattered ranks can be rallied again, and the successful rally, when it comes, must be apart from party or politics,

"Yours truly,

"E. NOTT.

"E. C. DELAVAN, Esq."

The subject of erecting an asylum for inebriates was, about this time, occupying the attention of certain benevolent men in the State, and Dr. Nott was written to with the view of obtaining his judgment on the proposed enterprise. His reply to one of the most determined and hopeful workers in the movement is in these words :

"DR. EDWARD WARNER—DEAR SIR : Absence from home is my apology for not replying to your letter.

"No one acquainted with the prevalence of inebriety, and its frightful consequences, can doubt the propriety of the enterprise in which you purpose to engage. An asylum for inebriates is demanded by the wants and woes which inebriety has occasioned, in every part of the entire country.

"It is impossible to estimate the amount of good such an institution, well conducted, would be likely to produce. How such a thing can be accomplished single-handed, and without public patronage, I cannot see. I know that the indomitable will of an individual, bent on doing good, can and often does, by the blessing of God, accomplish much. The best wishes of the wise and good throughout the land will accompany you in such an undertaking.

"Wishing you the divine blessing in an enterprise novel and full of promise,

"I am, very truly, yours, etc.,

"E. NOTT."

With the family of Mr. Delavan he was on terms of close intimacy during several of the last years of his life. He was often an inmate of their house, finding pleasure in the hospitality so freely accorded. The members of this family regarded him with affectionate veneration, and they were accustomed to show their interest in him and in his comfort, by sending him from time to time little tokens as well of kindly remembrance, as of delicate attention to his peculiar tastes. In acknowledging one of these, he writes the following pleasant letter to Mrs. Delavan, from whom the gift referred to had come:

"UNION COLLEGE, September 4.

"MY DEAR MRS. DELAVAN: I have just returned to my labors and my home, and find my good wife has contrived to surprise me by a taste of an article of food sent me by you as a token of remembrance—an article acceptable in itself, still more acceptable as such a token. It has not indeed attained to the full age required by the poets for its greatest perfection. This, I believe, is seven years. But seven years is a great part of the duration of the life of man. And, when I consider the hazard there would have been on your part, and the still greater hazard there would have been on mine, in waiting for it to ripen, I am glad you sent it as it is. It would have been welcome fresh from the press. Air, sunshine and water, bread, cheese and potatoes, are, at least to water-cure patients, among the principal comforts of life. You, who are so bountifully supplied with the good things of this world, may perhaps think this rather a stinted bill of fare. Still, it may be a question whether your good husband would not live longer, and enjoy more, were he restricted to it.

"Among the blessings meted out to the poor through the good providence of God, are frugal fare and hard labor. Their food and rest and sleep are sweet, their hearts light, and their spirits buoyant; each day being crowned with blessings. Not so their idle, fortune-favored neighbors. On them time hangs heavily, amusement palls; ennui oppresses them, and life, spent to no purpose, is felt to be a burden.

"Were there no life but this, duty and happiness would be inseparable—how much more so, now that there is another. We have each our field of duty, and in the discharge thereof, we fulfil our destiny.

"God has done much for us; be it ours to make all the requital in our power, by doing what we can to ameliorate the condition and elevate the character of our race.

"Yes, God has done much for us. We have earth in possession, heaven in prospect. Let us strive to grow in grace, that we may be prepared for the pure society, and holy enjoyments of the upper sanctuary. This is a frivolous world. Those who seek happiness from it only pursue phantoms. Home, sweet home, is a wife's and mother's theatre of action. I hear it said that you are very domestic, and I rejoice to hear it. Folly never pays. Second wives, it is said, have greater influence over their husbands than first wives; and in respect to both worlds there is no greater encumbrance than a fashionable, heartless wife, or a more effectual aid than a retiring, domestic, Christian helpmate. That you and your companion may be mutual helpers in life's journey; that your little ones may be so trained, and our older children so live, that we shall hereafter meet and perpetuate our friendship in a better world and among a purer society, is the prayer of your sincere friend,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

The tranquil happiness of this family circle was broken in upon after the interval of some months, by the great Invader; and to the mother, keenly afflicted by the blighting of hopes as well as by the wound given her affections, Dr. Nott addressed these sympathetic and comforting words:

"UNION COLLEGE, July 19, 1857.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Though not present in person, we have been with you in spirit dnring your season of affliction. And though aware that you have enjoyed the visits of your pastor, and the ministrations of your church, rendering any spiritual consolation from us less necessary, and perhaps the offer of it less proper, still you have ever been remembered by us in our daily petitions before the mercy-seat of our common Father.

"Repeated bereavements, though harder to be borne, may be more salutary on that account. You do not need to be told that afflictions are disciplinary; that we need them; that they are intended for our good, and that whom the Lord loves he chastens. Whether called to follow to the grave the dear remains of infant children, or to stand beside the bed of a dying parent, it is all the same. The stroke of the chastening rod is painful, but we have ever this consolation—it is a Father's hand that holds it. May you have grace in the hour of deepest trial to remember this, and come what will, in the true filial spirit to say, as Job did when fortune and children were both swept away by the same rude blast, 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

"The design of this life is to prepare us for heaven. Those whom John saw there had arrived 'through great tribulation'; and now as then the first and last notes of the song of Moses and the Lamb have been learned in the midst of scenes of sorrow. Our Saviour knows what is best for us. He died for us. He purposes to bring us ultimately home to heaven. We may surely trust Him on the way there; and certain may we be that not a tear will be shed, nor a pang felt through the entire journey, for which we shall not bless Him, on our safe and triumphant arrival. When looking back from eternal heights, our trials over, and our journey ended, we shall be enabled even to sing with heartfelt exultation, 'O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"'Here is firm footing—here is solid hope.
This can sustain us, all is sea beside—
Christian cling here, and 'mid wreck'd nature smile.'

"May God be with you; may He comfort and sustain you, as I trust He will, and to His name, alike in prosperity and adversity, be the glory.

"Affectionately yours,

"ELIPHALET NOTT.

"TO MRS. DELAVAN."

In another letter addressed to these bereaved parents, he thus refers to a scene of interest which occurred in the family of one of Mr. D.'s children by a former marriage, making it the occasion of some suggestive practical reflections:

"UNION COLLEGE, September 1, 1857.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS: I spent last Sabbath with Mary, her husband, and group of little ones. I was disappointed at not meeting you there, and regret that you were not. For though I was myself quite unwell, the occasion was a very interesting one, and as solemn as interesting. For, on that occasion, the parents presented themselves before the Lord, with the young immortals committed to their care to be watched over and educated for immortality. It was a beautiful sight to see the father, the mother, and the nurse, surrounding the domestic altar, each presenting a little child to receive the blessing and be sealed with the seal of Him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' God grant that the parents may be faithful to the vows then taken; that the children trained and taught for Jesus, may be among the number of those whose names are written in the Book of Life, and that, in the last great day, the parents standing at Christ's right hand may have the unspeakable happiness to say, 'Here are we, Lord, and the children intrusted to our charge.'

"To you, some of whose children have been called before you to the spirit world, it must be a happiness to remember that they were children previously consecrated to Jesus Christ, whose therefore they were, and who had a right to remove them from your tutelage whenever it pleased Him to do so. It should be pleasant, even for Christian parents, to build the tombs of children who die in the Lord—pleasant to visit their burial place. Their redeemed dust rests, and will securely rest till the Conqueror of death shall reappear for its recovery. Ah, then, when the bereaved mother shall receive, reanimate from the sepulchre and bearing the form of its risen Saviour, that precious dust which had slept so many ages in it, how utterly shall Death and the Grave have been vanquished!

"There will hereafter be rejoicing in view of those graveyards where the willow and cypress now wave, and of those graves now revisited in heaviness and tears; for, the hour is coming when, at the bidding of an already risen Saviour, they shall deliver up the dead that are in them.

"Let us, then, who profess to be Christ's disciples, anticipate this triumph, and visit the cemetery only to enkindle our zeal and quicken our faith, comforting one another with those precious words once addressed to the disciples, and through them to us. 'Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God believe also in me; in my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again and receive you to myself, *that where I am* you may be also.' Even so, come Lord Jesus. May this consolation be yours, and being yours may your bereavements be sanctified, and your tears become tears of joy. Peace be with you. Adieu.

"ELIPHALET NOTT.

"TO MR. AND MRS. DELAVAN."

There may be permitted a single extract from another letter, treating, to some extent, of the domestic relations of this family, and urging upon those to whom it is addressed, the performance of a Christian duty that circumstances seemed to render necessary. The letter is charmingly characteristic of the writer's spirit and temper as a lover and promoter of peace, and breathes besides a fine tone of Christian liberality which overrides the petty barriers that sometimes prevent Christians of different names from knowing the joys of full fraternal communion. To understand some allusions, it must be premised that Mrs. Delavan was a member of the Episcopal Church, while her husband was then, or had been, in the Presbyterian communion:

"Do not trouble your good wife about partaking of the bread and wine in a strange church. These elements are the mere outward sign, so far as the communicants are concerned. The thing signified is the communion of the spirit, which exists, or may exist, between all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, so far as they become known to one another, whether they ever meet at the same communion table or not. The cultivation of this fraternal spirit among Christians of different denominations is very desirable, and if the fellowship of the heart exist, and be maintained, whether they ever meet at the same communion table or not is not material.

"But with yourself it may have been a duty, not only because you have once been a member of that church, but because you have been at variance with its pastor, and the occasion furnished an opportunity to show that past injuries, if not forgotten, had been forgiven. The foot of the cross is the place where reconciliations should be effected and resentments be buried. You will feel happier for having done this, and the more so because you have felt yourself the injured person. There is one more reconciliation that must take place before you will feel at ease. It seems that some alienation of feeling among the members of your family circle prevented your presence at the baptism of your grandchildren. This is painful, and the difficulty must be compromised, no matter who is in the wrong, nor how much is the wrong. The greater the injury suffered, the greater the magnanimity of forgiving it. We are all poor sinners, have much to ask forgiveness for, and must not be strict to mark iniquity against our fellow-creatures. This family wound must be healed, and by free and full forgiveness, if it cannot in any other way.

"In haste. Yours, etc.,

"E. NOTT."

It is interesting to trace in these letters, written as they were in the frank unreserve of familiar intercourse, indications of the deepening earnestness with which the writer surveyed the truths so often commended by him to others from the pulpit. With growing age his grasp of earth relaxes more and more, but his hold on the "new earth" beyond, becomes stronger. His sense of duty and responsibility is elevated. The real significance, value, and mission of a man's life are more vividly seen by him. He becomes more keenly alive to sin's demerit, especially of his own, and fuller of trust in that divine strength, which treads down the power of sin, and makes strong the feeblest sinner who believes. His Christian graces grow riper and mellower. He is more humble, more forgiving, and more urgent in solicitations designed to secure concord and happy relations between friends and kindred who were suffering from unchristian estrangement. He was, in a word, maturing for heaven. His character, indeed, as a man of peace, who loved it and sought on all occasions to promote it, was not now manifested for the first time. It had always belonged to him, and was simply exhibited in brighter colors, and in fruits of sweeter flavor. One who knew him long and intimately, the Rev. Jacob Van Vechten, D. D., who was pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of Schenectady for thirty-five years, and trustee of Union College for even a longer period, describes this trait in the character of his venerated teacher and friend, in these words:

"The Presbyterian Church of Schenectady, composed as it was, in its earlier history, of discordant elements from Scotland, New England, and New Jersey, was frequently indebted to his wise and sagacious counsels and care, for preserving it from rupture. He was emphatically a lover of peace, especially among Christians. With humble piety he cordially sympathized, whether it was found among people of one nationality or of another; whether it wore the livery of the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian, or any other section of Christ's church. Doctrinal theories or denominational forms gave him little trouble, so long as he found the essential principles of spiritual life in wholesome action. While he was a decided friend of evangelical truth, he felt satisfied when he discovered its genuine fruits anywhere. Neighboring churches were accustomed to ask his interposition when slavery,temperance, or other causes, threatened disturbance. Catholic in his own opinions, he usually had much influence with both sides of opposing bodies. He also proved a balance-wheel in the Presbytery with which he was connected, and for many years contributed largely to its prevailing spirit of brotherly love."

To this testimony may be added that of his own pastor and steadfast friend of many years, the Rev. J. Trumbull Backus, D. D. It is still more decided and striking :

"For a third of a century, one, who has been perhaps as free to intrude upon him as any other, and had a full knowledge of all his temptations to bitterness, censoriousness, and uncharitableness—one with whom he conferred unreservedly, and expressed himself so unguardedly, that a glimpse of the wrong spirit would have been seen had he ever indulged it—here testifies, that if ever there was in mere man the nobleness of a thoroughly and invariably forgiving spirit, it characterized our departed friend and father. He talked freely of matters, in regard to which it was notorious that his sense of justice and honor had been cruelly outraged. But never did unchristian harshness of expression escape him. With such a spirit, what a power he had as a peacemaker! He who always so truly prayed, Forgive us, as we forgive those who have sinned against us,' could, and habitually did, throw himself, often with most benign effect, between opposing partisans in church and state. To many a furious and ruinous discord he has effectually said, 'Peace, be still.' In how many a social, and even in the more unmanageable domestic feud, has he gracefully and tenderly interposed, bringing order and rest out of confusion and wrath? Most of that record is, of course, only on High. But in respect to the loveliness and power of this spirit, enough is well known, and reverently felt, to assure us that to him may be ascribed all the glory and the good of that saying of our Lord: 'Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.'*

Dr. Van Vechten's immediate successor in the pulpit of the Reformed Church in Schenectady, the Rev. W. J. R. Taylor, D. D., who had rare opportunities for knowing Dr. Nott intimately, gives this pleasant account of the genial nature, tender sympathies, and beautiful Christian spirit that marked his venerable friend when the weight of years was pressing heavily upon him :

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* From Dr. Backus' funeral sermon.

"My most fragrant memories of Dr. Nott were connected with scenes of sickness, bereavement, and other deep trials in my own person and home from which the veil may be drawn aside only for a moment. How gentle, how attentive, how kind, how good, how considerate, wise, and devout the venerable old man was to me and mine in those sad days, I shall never forget. Then, as never before, I saw the lustre of his unostentatious piety, the maturity of his sanctified wisdom, and the fatherly tenderness of his truly Christian sympathy. The infirmities of his great age were already upon him, the bitterness of his own heavy trials had passed away, and the cup which he pressed to my lips was a 'cup of blessing.'"

CHAPTER XXIV.

DR. NOTT'S LAST YEARS OF LIFE.

Illness—Interview with the Class of 1809—Improved health—Journey to Philadelphia—Lectures to Young Ladies—Letter to Mr. McCoun—Return to Schenectady—Signs diplomas, but performs no college work—Letter to Mr. Delavan—Last Pulpit service—Revisits Philadelphia—His interest in the Noon-day Prayer-Meetings—Visit to the tomb of John Blair Smith—Affected by the nation's troubles—His closing years in Schenectady—Mode of life—Last attendance at church—His death and funeral—Newspaper tributes—Resolutions of presbytery.

THE health of Dr. Nott, though it had suffered some severe shocks, as noticed in former pages, remained comparatively good till 1859, when he had completed his eighty-sixth year. But for the infirmity in his feet, the effect of the rheumatic seizure of 1846, his old age, up to and beyond fourscore, might be considered fresh and hale. His mind at least, retained the clearness and vivacity of other days, and showed, in conversation, in correspondence, and in the class-room, but slight tokens of decay. In May of 1859, he was prostrated by a severe paralytic stroke. It was thought that this attack had brought him to the last brief stage of his earthly journey. The strength of his constitution, however, triumphed for a time even over this assault. After a confinement to his bed of several weeks, he had rallied so far as to be able to be taken out of doors for an hour or two of gentle exercise in the open air. He was, of course, not able to be present at the commencement exercises of this summer, but an affecting incident made the season, in its connection with him, memorable to the alumni gathered at the anniversary. The class of 1809 had been specially invited to come up and observe the semicentennial year of their graduation. The number of survivors was small indeed, but of these, nine were present, embracing, with perhaps one or two exceptions, all of the class then remaining alive. At their head were the Rev. Jacob Van Vechten, D. D., and the Hon. Gideon Hawley, LL. D., president of the Board of Regents of the New York State University. They expressed a strong desire to see, and greet once more, their venerable teacher, and on their request being made known, he at once consented to receive them in his sick room. They came together at the appointed hour, and being ushered into his chamber, the Rev. Dr. Van Vechten, the oldest of the number, and for years on terms of close intimacy with Dr. Nott, made a brief address in behalf of the body, expressing the happiness they felt at seeing him, and their best wishes for God's peace to rest upon him in his declining days. Dr. Nott, too feeble to rise from his chair, responded in words full of tenderness, repeating some of the well-remembered counsels he had addressed to them years before, spoke of the consolations which trust in the Redeemer gave him in this time of failing strength, commended his beloved pupils, now old men as well as he, to the care of the Unfailing Friend, bade them an affectionate farewell, taking each by the hand, saying that this interview between him and them was, in all probability, their last on earth, and then dismissed them with his benediction and his prayers. His words affected all present to tears, the whole scene being indescribably tender and impressive.

After this he continued gradually to improve, so that in the early autumn he had become strong enough to bear the journey to Philadelphia, whither he was taken with the view of passing the winter months in the milder climate of that region. He remained in that city during the winter, cheered by the society and attentions of Bishop Potter's family, and by those of Mrs. Nott's relatives, of whom he became the guest. His health grew better and his spirits seemed to rise with his growing strength. His conversation showed much of the same fascination which was wont to mark it when in the full vigor of earlier years. He resumed his attendance on church, rejoicing greatly that a benign Providence had restored to him a privilege which, through all his life, he had accounted precious exceedingly. He felt able to do more than this. He volunteered to give some lectures on "Kames' Elements," to a class of young ladies in Miss Anable's school, and though his watchful friends would have dissuaded him from undertaking what they feared would task his strength too severely, he persisted in his purpose, and carried it through successfully, to the great delight of his fair pupils, who felt it an extraordinary favor to receive lessons from an instructor so renowned. Such was his love of teaching, and so strong the desire to benefit those around him, and especially youth, that an opportunity for instructing had strange fascination for him, and he was tempted to embrace it, even when his physical condition warned him of the risk that might attend the effort. It was through the impulse of such a feeling that the following letter was written during this winter to a young clerical friend, to whom he hoped to do a service, by a word of counsel, made weighty by his own experience.

"PHILADELPHIA, February 9, 1860.

"MY SON: You are just commencing the journey of life. To you the rising sun shows its cheering rays along the entire extent of its prospective and untravelled pathway. I have nearly reached the close of that same journey, and the setting sun throws back its lengthened shadows along the entire extent of the sad retrospect.

"In the review I see that I have made mistakes—mistakes which I cannot now correct, for I cannot now repeat the journey—but could I, my son, (and I say it for your sake) I would from the outset think less of earth and time, and more of Heaven and immortality. I would preach Christ and Him crucified, more constantly, more exclusively, and more earnestly.—Why? Because, if the incarnation and death, and resurrection and ascension and eternal reign of the Son of God in heaven, in the midst of His redeemed people, be not a myth but a reality—they are a reality that absorbs all other realities, and become to the Christian, and especially to the Christian minister, his confession of faith, his rod of support to sustain him through life, his armor of defence and sword of victory in death, his passport to the gate of heaven, and his title to remain there throughout eternity, in welcome companionship with angels, who, guiltless though they be, will feel joy in his presence, and delight in his society; and this, on account, and only on account of Him who hath loved us, and hath redeemed us by His blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.

"Very sincerely your friend.

"ELIPHALET NOTT.

"REV. TOWNSEND McCOUN."

In the spring of 1860 he returned to Schenectady, passing the following summer and fall amid the scenes and avocations which had for him the greatest earthly interest. His service in the college was now nearly ended; he was present indeed, for a short time, on one or two commencement occasions after his illness in the spring of 1859, and conferred the baccalaurate degrees. He continued to sign the diplomas of the graduates for several years thereafter, the young men being specially desirous to have his autograph upon their parchments. In order to gratify their wish, the coveted signature was obtained, on one or two years, by his wife's steadying the hand, when it had become too feeble to hold a pen, or too tremulous to trace out distinctly the letters of his name. His active work, however, was over, though his mind at this time retained greater vigor than his body, and continued for a year or two capable of intelligent and, at times, of sustained exertion. The following letter, among the occasional ones written during the summer of 1860, exhibits his indomitable intellectual activity in the service of friends and of a loved cause, and is admirable besides, for the broad catholic Christian spirit which it breathes.

"UNION COLLEGE, August 15, 1860.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: I should wait to see you instead of writing, were I not leaving for Cherry Valley;* and you may want me to answer your sharp letter before my return. You submitted the original to have "the points rubbed off." You may think I have carried the process too far, but on reflection you will come to think as I do—if you do not now, you will when you shall have become as old as I am, or as near death as I consider myself to be. Better to err on the side of forgiveness and good wishes than on that of recrimination, no matter how great the provocation. There are other things, concerning which I wish to advise with you before you proceed to act. But I shall be gone so short a time, that delay in action till I return will be no inconvenience. I belong, I hope, to the great Catholic Church of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the head. I have no regard for the *different denominations* but on account of their relation to the great Catholic Church, which is the body in which Jesus Christ dwells. But though I thus feel (and I have been brought to feel thus by the Providence of God), I am bound to respect the opinions and feelings of those, who, having seen religion exhibited only in one outward form, have come to think that form essential; whereas, in the sight of God, these externalities, so precious to the worshipper, are in themselves of no avail. But I must leave the discussion of these matters with you and your good wife, till I see you—and, in the meantime, with kind remembrances to yourselves and the children, I am, as ever,

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* The reference is to his last visit to Cherry Valley, the circumstances of which are detailed in Judge Campbell's account, page 46.

"Your friend,

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

The last time he rendered service in the pulpit * was on the Thanksgiving anniversary in November of this year. It fell to the lot of the writer of these pages to preach the sermon on this occasion, the service being one in which the several churches in Schenectady were wont to unite, and the place of holding it that year being the Presbyterian church. Desiring to have Dr. Nott present and take some part in the services before the sermon, I was on my way to the college for that purpose, when I met him, accompanied by Mrs. Nott, taking the air in his carriage. On mentioning my request he cheerfully consented, adding with a smile, "You will have to help me up from the seat to the desk in the pulpit; then I can help myself." He was promptly at the church next morning, at the opening of the service; the requisite assistance was given, some considerable effort being necessary to raise him to his feet. One or two slight repetitions in the phraseology, denoting a little failure in the memory, marked his prayer, which was one of singular fervor and impressiveness. The distracted state of the country was particularly dwelt upon, and the soul of the aged petitioner seemed to go out in supplication to the Almighty Ruler that He would "charm down"—the speaker's own expression—the spirit of strife and discord then rampant, restore harmony to the people, and preserve the Union, with all the priceless treasures of individual freedom and happiness which had so long been secured under it. As this was his last pulpit utterance, it is certain that no former one in which he conducted the devotions of a public assembly, was ever more appropriate, tenderly solemn, and affecting.

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* He officiated afterward in the college chapel.—T. L.

In the early part of December following he revisited Philadelphia, with the purpose of passing the winter again among the kind friends whose attentions had made his former visit so pleasant. During this winter, besides the Sabbath services, he attended, with deep interest, the noonday prayer meetings, held in a church in Sansom street, rarely being absent unless the weather was particularly inclement. At these meetings were gathered the clergy of most of the religious denominations of the city, and people from the flocks to which they severally ministered; the sectarian element being wholly eliminated from the services in which they heartily joined. The national dissensions, the rumblings of the storm threatening to burst in wide-spread disaster and possible ruin to what all patriotic and Christian hearts held dearest, gave unusual solemnity to these meetings, bound the hearts of worshippers more closely together, made slight variations of belief look contemptible, and imparted fervor and intensity to the spirit of prayer. Dr. Nott was frequently called upon to take a part in these devotions, and sometimes spoke a few earnest words of exhortation to the attentive crowds filling the house from day to day. He loved "the communion of saints." He was in his element in meetings of this kind, where all who loved and served a common Lord were fused into one; and he often spoke of the delight he found in mingling his prayers with those of Christian people of other names, on these impressive occasions.

In the spring, just before leaving Philadelphia for his home, he visited the tomb of the first president of Union College, Dr. John Blair Smith, whose remains lie in the cemetery of the Pine Street Presbyterian Church. He had been warmly attached to this excellent man, and loved to speak of his amiable character and many excellences, holding them and him always in highest honor. He went to the spot, in company with Mrs. Nott and Dr. Brainerd, then the pastor of the church. He stood for a long time uncovered beside the grave, gazing in silence, and with evident deep emotion, upon the monument which recorded the name and worth of the departed. Dr. Brainerd at length led him gently away, and conducted him to his own house near at hand; no word being spoken by either till they had reached the pastor's study, when Dr. Nott gave spontaneous utterance to his pent-up feelings in a prayer of such touching fervor and pathos that it melted the hearers into tears. At the close he said simply, and with quiet emphasis, "Now my work in Philadelphia is done—I shall never visit it more." When he left the city, soon after, it proved indeed that he had left it never to return.

A letter written by him this winter to Mr. Delavan shows, in a charming light, his gentle and forgiving temper, and how habitual it was for him, in times of trial, peril, alarm, or any exigency, to respond to the Psalmist's words of unfaltering faith, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."

"PHILADELPHIA, February 5, 1861.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Yours of January 30th is received. I am now, through God's great goodness, so far recovered from my late severe illness, concerning which Mrs. Nott has written you, as to be able to attend church once more, and permitted to unite in offering to

God prayers for the preservation of our guilty and distracted country. In this petition, though separated, I doubt not we and ours unite together at the throne of grace.

"I have spoken to Miss Jackson, who will write to you herself as to her views and recollections. Be the fact what it may in the miraculous change of the fish and the grapes, your remark, if it be a fact, will help us to look less to the fermented bread or the fermented wine, and more to the spirit of the ordinance. It is in keeping with the character of the teachings of the New Testament, which always regards external forms less than the temper of the heart of the worshipper at the altar.

"I hope the new Canadian book will be so amended as by the kindly spirit imparted to it to conciliate the D. D.'s and others who may have heretofore felt aggrieved by the course you have pursued.

"I deeply regret to hear what you say of——. He has acted under excitement, and must be judged and treated with the more forbearance and kindness, for the time being, on that account. The more he may have wronged you, the more becoming the Christian character to forgive and pray for him; and in so doing all may in time come right.

"I regret to hear of Willie's illness, and of the continued illness of Mary's little daughter. It is a relief to be informed at the same time that she herself is well. 'Mercies and judgments alike proceed from kindness—infinite kindness.'

"As to our national troubles, I can only say that, though you are in one State and we are in another, we are equally near the Throne of Grace and all that there is for us to is to pray God, notwithstanding our sins, to spare, in his mercy, for Christ's sake, this Republic, and not in wrath to give it up to destruction.

"With affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Delavan, in which Mrs. Nott unites,

"Very truly yours,"

"ELIPHALET NOTT."

He took the liveliest interest in public affairs. He rejoiced in the marvellous progress and prosperity which his own life, spanning the whole period of the nation's life, had witnessed. He keenly deplored the growing troubles which had culminated in fratricidal collision, threatening to break up the Union through which all this unexampled prosperity had been secured. As a Christian patriot and a life-long lover and promoter of peace, the bloody conflict greatly distressed him. He regarded it as a merited punishment for national sins, preëminent among others, the sin of slavery; and in this view the prospect, at times, was sad and gloomy. Still he was hopeful of the issue, believing that God had purposes of mercy toward the nation hitherto so signally favored, and that in due time, after such chastisement as he saw fit to inflict, he would bring the people out of their distresses, and perpetuate those civil and religious institutions, whose mission and work, in the interests of the race, he regarded as only just begun. He lived long enough to see his hope verified, and the prospect brighten every day, that the Union so sorely threatened with disruption, would safely emerge out of its perils, would become more stable through trials, and would yet fulfil the promise which its past career had inspired.

He returned to Schenectady in the year 1861, appearing to feel that his work on earth was done, and that nothing need call him again from the quiet retreat where he wished to pass the remnant of his years. His interest in the college, and all that pertained to its welfare, could not cease while life or reason remained, though he no longer took active part in its affairs. He knew that the time of his departure was at hand, and that at any hour the slight hold that he had on life might be loosened. He was ready for the time, having long lost, as he told his family, the dread with which the idea of death had once impressed him, and looking upon the "last enemy," now, rather as a friend that should set him free from the load of earthly infirmities and open for him the portals of the enduring rest. In the interviews which his friends had with him during these few last years, it was striking to observe with what serene and steadfast confidence he leaned upon "the arm of the Beloved," how humble and childlike he was, how uncomplaining and perfectly submissive under the Father's rod, which was also a staff to comfort and support. His family devotions were still performed regularly, as they had been for long years.

He would suffer nothing to interrupt this exercise, which it was his custom to hold in his study, shortly after leaving his chamber and before other business was begun. Besides reading the Scriptures and prayer, all the more impressive from the sitting posture his infirmities made necessary, a hymn would often be sung. Several hymns, dear to the heart of devotion everywhere, such as "Rock of Ages," "God moves in a mysterious way," "O for a closer walk with God," "The Star of Bethlehem," "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "I asked them whence their victory came," and others equally sweet and inspiriting, were his special favorites. All the members of his household, domestics as well as others, were expected to be present at these times, and all were particularly remembered in the petitions for the Divine mercy and blessing. This habit, which had become a second nature from years of repetition, was the last to be laid aside, imparting its soothing influences to him till within a few months of his death.

The Sabbath, too, had special charms for him, though he had been educated to observe it with a strictness common to the Puritanic homes among which his childhood was reared. He regarded the Lord's day as in no sense his own, that is, as giving him liberty to attend to secular business or engagements of any sort. He aimed, and sought to devote the day to duties in unison, as he conceived, with its prescribed sanctity. He wrote no letters on this day, except an occasional one of condolence, or of other religious character. Nor did he receive letters, or suffer the post-office to be visited to obtain any that might be awaiting his call. He was not less strict in his attendance on public worship. It was a fixed rule with him to be at church twice on the Sabbath, and if he were missed at any time from his pew, his pastor knew that he was either away from home, or engaged in some pulpit, or too ill to be present. So strong was his anxiety to attend church, that he sometimes, in his last years, persisted in going, when the weather and his feeble condition seemed to forbid his venturing out. He would say to Mrs. Nott, whose solicitude led her at times to remonstrate with him on the risk of exposing himself too much, "I must go while I can—it will not be long." In the winter of 1864 he left his house and rode to the church in the midst of a severe storm, saying to his wife, who sought to dissuade him, "I must go—it may be the last time." And so it proved to be. Thereafter his decline was such that he ceased to appear in the public assembly. His mind began to yield more and more to the weight of years, showing toward the last that but few sparks of its original fire remained. What was left of life glided tranquilly away, his natural force daily weakening, and the sway of infirmity increasing. Once or twice during the year 1865, the announcement was widely made through the papers that President Nott was at the point of death and could last but a few days longer. The tidings proved premature, showing, at least, the interest taken by the public in the expected event. At length, on the morning of January 29, 1866, he peacefully breathed his last, in the full hope of the higher life beyond.

The funeral services were held in the Presbyterian Church, on the afternoon of February 2d, the spacious house being filled with the numbers gathered there to do honor to the venerated dead. Many former associates and friends from abroad, and many who revered and loved him for his work's sake, were present to participate in the solemnities. The services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Backus, the pastor of the church in which Dr. Nott had been for so many years a devout worshipper, and where he had himself so often preached. Dr. Backus' address was a feeling and appropriate tribute to the character and worth of the beloved friend, whose intimate counsels it had been his privilege for more than thirty years to share. After the exercises in the church had closed, the remains were borne, amid a large concourse of spectators, to their burial place in the Vale Cemetery, lying in the rear of the colleges. There they were tenderly consigned to rest, in a spot long before selected for the purpose, and belonging to the college. Thus, sacredly does the institution still hold the dust of him to whose devoted labors it mainly owes whatever success it has achieved, or honor, that belongs to its record.

On the death of Dr. Nott, the newspapers of the day, all over the country, were prompt to recognize his distinguished merits and services. The several tributes they paid, though varying in many things, were uniform in praising a name honored wherever known. They show how widely and deeply Dr. Nott had impressed himself upon his age; how familiar the public were with the work to which his life had been devoted, with the fruits it had borne, and how just was the popular appreciation of a character, the full lustre of which could only be seen after death had dissipated the mists of prejudice and passion that at times had obscured it. Some of these tributes show remarkable familiarity with the life and characteristics of Dr. Nott, and are so minute and full in their delineation as almost to make the work of a biographer superfluous. It has fallen to the lot of very few men—not specifically men of action—whose main life-work was wrought out amid the seclusion of a literary institution, to be honored with such high, spontaneous, and wide-spread eulogy on the part of the press.

Passages from some of these tributes might form a fitting close to this record of a long and useful life. One alone is given, as a representative of a number of kindred character. It is from the eloquent pen of the Rev. William B. Sprague, D. D., the gifted author of "Annals of the American Pulpit." It is in the form of a series of resolutions passed by the ecclesiastical body of which Dr. Nott had been a member for a period of sixty-eight years.

"The Presbytery of Albany, deeply affected by the late removal by death of the Rev. Dr. Nott,

"*Resolved*, 1, That we reverently acknowledge the Providence of God in having removed from us this venerable man, who has so long been known both as a patriarch and a prince in our ecclesiastical domain, and that we gratefully recognize the same Providence in continuing him among us so long, in diligent and efficient coöperation, in aid of the influence of the ministry, and for the promotion of the best interests of the church.

"*Resolved*, 2, That we regard his death as the extinction of one of the greater lights of the American church; that having been constituted with extraordinary powers and placed ultimately in circumstances most favorable to their development, he occupied a wider sphere than has been allotted to almost any of his contemporaries; that while his electric power in the pulpit marked him as one of the greatest orators of the age, his wide range of thought, and especially his far reaching insight into the future, and his almost intuitive discernment of the principles of human action, in connection with an uncommonly gentle and peaceable spirit, gave him a commanding influence both in the church and in the world, and has caused his name to be reverently pronounced in both hemispheres.

"*Resolved*, 3, That we offer our cordial sympathy to the distinguished literary institution over which he presided so long and with such signal ability; not merely to the trustees, professors, tutors, and present generation of students, but to the still greater numbers scattered throughout the land, who have enjoyed the benefit of his instructions; and we devoutly implore, that that institution may find blessings flowing into it through the channel of its bereavement, and that its whole future course may be signalized by the richest tokens of the divine favor.

"*Resolved*, 4, That we heartily condole with the widow and children, and other near relations of this venerable man, in view of the loss they have sustained in his departure, while we congratulate them that his memory is gratefully entwined with so many interests, both public and private, and that his history must always form a noble chapter in the history of his country."

CHAPTER XXV.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES—OLD AGE—RELIGIOUS LIFE.

Unprecedented length of Dr. Nott's Presidency—His long survival of collegiate and official associates—The great veneration felt for him—His official dignity—His interest in the war of the Rebellion—The number of college graduates who fought in it—Their parting with him—His prayers and benedictions—Character of Dr. Nott's preaching—His religious, as contrasted with his public life—His spirituality, as seen in private intercourse—His unselfishness—His large charity—His views of education in its higher aims—Incident at his funeral—Its proof of the one humanity.

IT was in the spring of 1859 that Dr. Nott showed the first symptoms of that physical decline which finally ended his days upon earth. He was then eighty-six years old, and had been for fifty-six years President of Union College. Aside from a brief suspension caused by the attack of inflammatory rheumatism mentioned in Chapter XXI., there had been, up to that period, no intermission worth stating, in any of his duties as head of the institution. The same might be said of his unceasing outside labors for its advancement. He had never been absent from a single commencement since 1804. He had seldom been away from his daily place in the chapel or the lecture room. Though occupied every vacation with arduous labors for the college, which took him to New York and other places, the beginning of each term found him at his post, ready for the performance of his scholastic duties. It was only a short time before, that his family were awakened by his coming home after the midnight hour. He had hastened from New York to be at his place in the college, but finding no carriage at the depot, this old man, then quite lame, and several years past eighty, had walked more than a mile, unattended, at that dark and solitary hour of the night. "Dr. Nott has come home," was our surprised exclamation on hearing the news in the morning, "nothing can keep him from being at his post." The fact is mentioned as a striking evidence of his indefatigable diligence, and his conscientious punctuality in meeting every appointment connected with the college, or with any other business in which he might be engaged.

At every faculty meeting during that long period of nearly sixty years, his commanding form was to be seen at the head of a band of professors, almost all of whom had been his pupils, and who revered him as a father, while acknowledging him as their literary chief. That chair he still continued to occupy, though faculty after faculty had passed away. Allen, and Davis, and Hassler, who used to meet with him when he was the young president, had been gone for nearly half a century. The circle that surrounded him in his vigorous prime, Dr. Andrew Yates, Dr. Thomas McAuley, Bishop Brownell, old men when they died, had borne to him the same relations—the first as a colleague whom he always greatly loved and honored, the others as pupils and esteemed associates. Francis Wayland, and Bishop Alonzo Potter, once delighted listeners to his instructions in the class-room, afterward his chosen assistants, had years ago been removed to other high places of literary and ecclesiastical trust, for which his instructions, as they themselves were fond of acknowledging, had so eminently fitted them. These, too, were feeling the weight of years, and most of their contemporaries had passed away, as they were soon to follow—the venerable President still surviving, like one who stood alone in the deserted halls,

"And all but he departed."

At every commencement, during these later years, gray-headed men were coming back to greet him as their father, the guide of their youth. Such remembrances, it may be well supposed, would have saddened him; but there was always a young spirit in the old man, that rejoiced in the ever-coming accessions, and renewed its affections with every succeeding band, whether of teachers or of pupils. A third and a fourth generation of college officers had gathered round him, but there he still sat in the same old study, in the same old arm-chair, only furnished with wheels rendered necessary for that easier locomotion which his extreme age demanded. There he still sat, as erect in form, as commanding in presence, as vigorous in all mental action, while inspiring more and more of reverence as the distance grew wider between him and his younger colleagues.* He seemed to present a symbol of the immutable.

And so, too, the outside friends of the college, and the body of its trustees, had been repeatedly changed. The old founders, Schuyler, George Clinton, Van Rensselaer, Romeyn—all who had aided in the establishment of the institution—the official men and clergy who took part in the president's installation—had long been in their graves. None remained who had been his associates in the board during his earlier years. Blatchford, and Coe, and Proudfit, and Duane, had been "gathered to the fathers." Of the statesmen who had aided him, and to whom, in turn, he had given wise counsel, political as well as religious, none were left. Hamilton, Ambrose Spencer, Chancellor Kent, De Witt Clinton, had long since passed off the stage of action. Later still, Marcy, and Silas Wright, and William Kent, were gone. What memories must have thronged the aged soul as he thus sat among his juniors, his children, and his children's children! The college board with which he had so long acted, now numbered more of the dead than of the living, while those who had taken the places of the former, Walworth, Van Vechten, Delavan, were fast growing old. But there stood the ancient president, still at his post. Though almost a nonagenarian, he was still to be seen taking the lead of business at their annual meeting, and still marching at their head in the annual college procession.

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* To the more youthful professors and tutors, or to the students who came back to look upon the face of their revered instructor, it gave the feeling of something unearthly, something almost divine, as called forth by the presence of one who has gone far beyond the ordinary limits of human life. A very old man is always a wonder-inspiring object. But such an old man! Such a spectacle of longevity still showing itself erect and firm after so many years of unintermitted activity! Homer well describes the emotion in the language of the young Telemachus when he first gets a sight of old Nestor, who had outlived three generations of men:

"*ὥστε μοι ἀθάνατος ἰνδάλλεται εἰσοράασθαι,*

"Like an immortal doth he seem to my beholding."—*Odyss.* iii. 246.

From the commencement of 1859, he was, for the first time, absent, and although his place was well supplied by Dr. Hickok, yet nothing could keep from the minds of all present the feeling of that unwonted vacancy. The prayer of the vice-president, the numerous allusions to him in the orations of the graduates, the minor modulations of the music, kept ever in the thoughts the one memory that seemed to impart a shade of sadness to all the exercises of the day. He who had been for fifty-five years the prominent figure in these recurring scenes, was not there, and how could Union College do without him? It almost seemed as though the very being of the institution had become identified with his memory and his name.

Contrary to the general expectation, there was a rally of the strong vitality, and Dr. Nott recovered sufficiently to enable him to travel for the benefit of his health. He partially resumed his duties in the college, and was present at one or two commencements following. He continued feeble, however, until the beginning of our terrible national conflict. By this he was much affected, and it, doubtless, contributed much to his final prostration. During all his life he had been preëminently a peace-maker, as has been noticed in previous chapters where an account has been given of his efforts to heal the divisions in the Presbyterian Church. There had been other crises in our troublesome political movements when the same curative influence had been felt, though the hand was unknown. His advice had been sought at Albany, and heeded, sometimes, at Washington. Propositions deeply affecting our national welfare have been made and discussed in Dr. Nott's study, when his name did not appear in the strifes of the political arena. But though a peace-maker, in that blessed sense intended in the Saviour's benediction, he was never a compromiser, at least, a compromiser of anything that might be called right and principle. This was evident in his advice to his temperance-party friends. So, too, long years had borne testimony to his intense abhorrence of slavery, but he was ever in favor of mildness, forbearance, and conciliation, as long as anything could be hoped from such a course. Events, however, at last convinced him how little was to be expected in this way, and then his whole heart was in the struggle which he early saw could only end in the extinction of its cause. The winter of 1860 he spent in Philadelphia for the benefit of his health ; and there he was visited by Southern gentlemen who had been old graduates of the college. He labored earnestly to show them the folly and madness of secession, as it was then threatened, and to remove from their minds the impression, then very strong, that the North would never hazard a war for the preservation of the Union. He saw that our strong national being could not die, or even be threatened with death, without a struggle unexampled in the history of the world, and there was ever before his mind a picture of the awful desolations it must occasion. He utterly distrusted the wisdom of man in such a crisis. His hope was alone in God, but though this was strong, there were still seasons of despondency. He could not cease praying for the nation, but he sometimes felt that it *might*, perhaps, be heaven's purpose to destroy it, to make its short history a beacon rather than an example to the world.

Intense were the sufferings of this aged soul, in view of such a possible catastrophe. He seemed to feel that he had even more at stake than younger men—a greater share in his country's life. His many years had given him an interest they could hardly realize. The friend of Hamilton, the intimate companion and counsellor of Spencer, Kent, and Clinton; associated, as he had been, with the earlier growth and later strengthening of our national unity; the head of a college that had numbered its students from every State; long connected, ecclesiastically, with the ministers of religion at the South as well as at the North—he could not bear the thought of the national dissolution. His heart was wrung with anguish, and his prayers were continually ascending that this bitter cup might pass away with the restoration of peace and unity to his beloved country.

And he did live to see it. When the close of the war was told to him, he had nearly done with earth. The outward man, and the mere outward local memory, had so far decayed that he seemed to have but dim recognition of things immediately around him; but the great past lay deeper in the soul, and the great hope of the future—so indissolubly linked with it—brightened the inner recollection, when it had become, in a measure, insensible to things that were nearer the surface of his being.

He had, moreover, a strong personal interest in the war, as connected with the college and his own family. Exposed to its perils were two beloved grandsons, for whom his prayer went daily up that God would "cover their heads in the day of battle." One fought bravely at Fort Donelson, and afterward endured a long and cruel imprisonment in Texas.* Another was numbered among the mortally wounded in the great closing battle of the war, but survived and was present at his grandfather's funeral.† A large number of students from the undergraduate classes had gone forth to meet the urgent calls of Lincoln. The writer is reminded of a memorable morning, when, from the sophomore class alone, eight voices were silent at the calling of the roll. They had responded to the latest summons. Some never returned. The prize scholar of that class sleeps at Port Hudson.* A proportionate number answered to other calls. Of graduates and undergraduates, the whole quota from the catalogues of Union College amounted to more than three hundred. They fought on every battle-field, and in every rank of the service. Continually, during all the last years of the war, were they leaving the peaceful lecture-room for a life so full of danger, and repeated were the occasions of their parting from the aged president, as they sought to carry with them his benedictions and his prayers. Especially memorable was the farewell visit of one of the younger professors, when he left his classes to take the command of a regiment; but still more touching was the scene when there came the news of his fall on the bloody field of Chancellorsville.† The old man of ninety could not be present at the funeral exercises in the college chapel, but he could send for the widow, and there, in his own chamber of suffering, and unable to rise from his couch, pray most tenderly for her and her orphan children. Such events called out all his sympathies, and, though the shadows were coming over his mind, kept alive to the last his prayerful interest in the great struggle.

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* Charles Nott, son of Joel B. Nott, now judge of the Court of Claims at Washington.

† General Robert B. Potter. His wounds, received in one of the last great battles in Virginia, were so severe that his recovery was for a long time despaired of.

Since the death of Dr. Nott in 1866, the leading traits in his character and career have been frequently given in the newspapers. It is therefore difficult to speak of some of them without the appearance of repetition. His long connection with the college, his sixty-two years' presidency, has been dwelt upon as an unparalleled fact. His pulpit oratory, in the prime of his days, has been made the theme of frequent eulogy and sometimes of adverse criticism. But there is no denying that he was a most consummate orator, imitating no one, and not easy to be imitated by others. A collection of Dr. Nott's oldest manuscript sermons have been furnished to us by Mrs. Urania Nott, his surviving widow, and whose devotion to his memory has made her indefatigable in gathering the choicest materials for this biography. They were never intended for the press, though a few of them have been lately published. They are fragmentary and imperfect; yet even in those ancient, faded, time-stained papers, as they lie before the writer, there are plainly to be discerned the grounds of his high reputation. Voiceless as they are, and without the charm of his delivery, they recall vividly to memory the vocal accompaniment once so grandly filled out in their impassioned utterance. There is one more legible than the rest. It is on Death, a subject that was ever in his thoughts, and on which he preached perhaps more frequently than on any other, unless it were the kindred themes of the Judgment and the Resurrection. As we look upon this old paper, the interest is enhanced by the thought that almost all, it may be all, who heard the sermon on its first delivery are now, with the preacher, in their graves. They have tried the great reality here so impressively depicted. Each individual of them, even the humblest, has passed through a scene of more dramatic interest than was ever exhibited on any earthly stage, or described in any work of fiction. This old sermon is not dogmatical; it is not argumentative or rationalistic; it is not exegetical, nor practical even in the common sense of that word as denoting a didactic or prudential application; it is not crowded with texts, though manifesting, in every part, the profoundest Scriptural spirit. It is not alarming, as the term is sometimes applied to sermons;

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* James O. Liebenau, son of the Rev. M. F. Liebenau, of Rosendale, N. Y. Nothing could arouse a keener feeling of the evil and utter wickedness of this war than the letters of the mother, lamenting the untimely death of this only son.

† Colonel Elias Peissner, professor of German Literature and Political Economy in Union College. He was a scholar of superior merit, from the University of Munich. His promising literary prospects, and increasing reputation, could not restrain him from a patriotic service which ended with the sacrifice of his life.

The feeling excited by its perusal is rather one of deep solemnity, excluding terror and agitation by the sympathetic mournfulness of its tones. Such must have been the effect upon the hearers; such is still the effect, in the reading of this ancient, time-worn homily. How very sad, how deeply serious, the picture it everywhere presents! As a written composition it is open to criticism; for Dr. Nott seldom preached with any view to publication. Its words and sentences are arranged in such a way as to be most effective in their utterance; so that, to the silent reader, who may miss the emphasis intended by certain words and certain repetitions, they may have the appearence of tautology. But, with allowance made for all this, there is enough to show the wonderful power of the preacher, and to justify the reports of the effects he produced on deeply attentive audiences. It is a picture of mortality presented in every conceivable light—a vivid chronicle of "the King of Terrors," carried down from his malignant triumph in the Garden of Eden through the long death-and-sin-developing history of the race. The countless trophies of the monster are set in array before us; "the nations underground;" the generations of the dead, so far surpassing the populations of the living world; the millions that have died on the battle-field, or that have perished, in so many ways, by the cruelty of man himself; the innumerable forms of death-bed scenes; the hosts of

> "Fierce diseases waiting round,
> To hurry mortals home";

the great diversity of its victims; all conditions, all ages, paying their tribute to this inexorable potentate; the mightiest as well as the feeblest, yielding their indispensable homage; the huge son of Anak lying extended in his giant length; the multitude of "wailing infants," just breaking from the cloud and so soon to disappear again in the dark folds of death; the little ones that crowd the very vestibule * of Orcus; the multitude of youthful travellers ever

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* "Continuo auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo;
Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos,
Abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo."
—*Virg. Æn.*, vi. 426.

swelling the ranks of the sad procession, and ever falling by the way; the old pilgrims continuing their halting march over the broken arches of the bridge of life, falling at last into the dark stream that flows beneath, and disappearing in their long journey to the returnless shore. Again, we have the thought of death presented as a *doom*, in opposition to that poor rationalizing that would attempt to extract its sting, by calling it a *debt*—a "debt of nature." Mournful, very mournful is this picture of human life. The feeling left is not so much one of alarm, we say, as of deep, and softening, and soul-healing sadness. This is its moral power, more effective than any impression of terror merely that lacks its spirit of tender commiseration.

We have said that Dr. Nott's sermons were not doctrinal. This must be understood in a technical sense. They were very far from being destitute of a rich doctrinal suggestiveness. In the example on which we have been dwelling, there is not a word said about "the covenants"; there is the briefest mention of "original sin," confined almost entirely to the one citation of Romans v. 12; but still the dogma is there in its most startling and impressive form. The doctrinal conclusion, left to the silent conscience of the thought-

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"And voices now are heard and wailing cries,
Where weeping infant ghosts the portal throng,
Of joyful life deprived, snatched from the breast,
Whom a dark day has seized and whelmed in death."

Dr. Nott did not indulge in classical quotation, though, like Jeremy Taylor, and other great preachers of a former age, he would have feared no appearance of the pedantic in introducing such references whenever they would serve to illustrate, or add force to, any important thought. But what a problem it presents! The dying, suffering—sometimes greatly suffering infant! It is a mystery at which science and philosophy stand aghast. They cannot solve it. They are dumb, or stammer foolishly, or utterly miscalculate in every attempt to balance by their light weights the awful burden of the mystery that presses us on every side. Take this life alone; view it aside from all ideas of retribution in another, and it is far too serious a thing for any scheme of easy or liberal religionism. We are carried here beyond the physical. There is something fearful in the human condition, and whatever scheme of theology would take out the severe, or "the harsh features," only adds to the terribleness of the mystery, while, in the same proportion divesting it of the emotional and the tender.

ful hearer, comes up in every division of the solemn picture, without formal reference or logical statement. One sad thought runs through it all: Surely there must be something greatly wrong in the state of man. If this picture be true, he cannot be as God made him, or as His goodness must have intended him to be. This world of tombs, this life in the midst of all surrounding death, could not have been his original destiny. There must have been some sad misunderstanding between Heaven and Earth. The skies could not look down so brightly and so calmly upon us with all below so filled with sorrow and desolation, had there not been some dire breach of covenant somewhere in our human history. The argument accumulates with all the more force in the absence of all syllogistic statement. The thoughtful soul of the hearer draws its own inference, and it is in the very language of Scripture: Διὰ τοῦτο, "*On account of this.*" The *wherefore* comes with a power that excludes all possibility, all suspicion,of any lurking fallacy. "*Wherefore*, as by one man sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin, *so* death must have passed upon all men, *for that* all have sinned." The great truth might have been taught by a formal theological, exegetical sermonizing, and there are times when it should be so taught; but we may doubt whether any dogmatical description of the tree, its root and its branches, could have had the moral power of such an exposition of its deadly fruit. It might fix the doctrine, as a doctrine, more clearly in the intellect; but the very process of logical ratiocination would render it less effective for the heart. The other style, too, corresponds best to the true idea of *preaching*. This is not arguing, as has been elswhere said, nor lecturing, but "the voice of one crying." It is the *præco*, or herald, *proclaiming* a divine message, uttered and received as divine, but grounded, in its testimony, on the most solemn *fact* in our humanity. Such is the Scriptural idea of the κῆρυξ. Such is the meaning it ever gives to the derived verb as employed of the proclamation of the Gospel.

In connection with the subject of Dr. Nott's pulpit eloquence, it becomes important to say something more definitely of his religious character. This has been much misunderstood. "What a contrast," we heard a man once say, and a very good man too, "between Dr. Nott's outer life, as it appears in the world, and his peculiar style of preaching." It was a thought not unfrequently entertained by persons but superficially acquainted with him. He is ever giving us sermons, they would say, on death, judgment, and eternity, and yet we find him busily engaged in some of the most secular operations of the times. "What connection between topics like these and experiments in anthracite coal-burning or the obtaining of patents for new inventions of stoves, or making improvements in steamboat machinery, or forming companies for the working of mines?" Such remarks proceeded from utter ignorance of the man. It belonged to his energetic nature that he should be earnest in schemes for what he deemed conducive to the worldly advancement of human life, while at the same time most thoughtful upon the eternal destiny of himself and others. He does not assert this of himself, but we cannot help being impressed with its truth as we read his meek, apologizing letter (page 239) to Dr. Tucker, who had told him of the censorious remarks which such occupations had occasionally called forth. He had, moreover, an ever active spirit that allowed him no rest. He must be doing for the sake of doing. Mere study could never satisfy this strong tendency of his nature. The sight of anything defective, whether in machinery or in education, immediately roused an earnest desire for its correction. It should be remembered, too, that most of the secular enterprises in which he became engaged were connected with the financial interests of the college; others grew out of these; and some of them may have been the products of his own busy, inventive mind. Aside from direct utilities, they were natural and congenial to one who was ever looking for fields of enterprise, and who held that what could be done, and well done, ever ought to have a doer. It was the love of *action*, wholly different, both in its moral and practical character, from the love of scheming, or of lucrative speculation, and hence it was that Dr. Nott's plans, when successful, generally enriched others instead of himself. Least of all was it the love of money. His unbounded liberality, his numerous acts of charity, above all, that pure unselfishness which, with all who knew him well, formed so marked a trait of his character, were utterly at war with any such imputation. Equally striking was his freedom from all vindictiveness, connected, as this was, with his rigorous impartiality and his own generous estimate even of those by whom he found himself most sharply opposed. There never was a public man in America who cared so little about fame, and yet he could not be content with retirement, though ever relishing the scenes of college and domestic life.

Such a character, it may be admitted, is unusual, but there is no contradiction in it. He might seem a man of the world, like other men of the world, to those who looked only on one aspect of his varied life. That there was another side to him, a truly spiritual side, was known to a cherished circle of intimate and attached friends. They did not derive this knowledge simply from his sermons. It was the unmistakable impression of that inner life from which those most thoughtful and solemn discourses flowed. He preached much on these grave themes because he was ever thinking upon them. It was the steady undercurrent of his soul to which his thoughts returned the moment the outer deflection was, in any way, removed or relaxed. It was the same man who could come home from harassing attendance upon the legislature at Albany, and, with the dust of the railroad still upon his garments, could enter the college chapel to pour out those moving petitions whose spiritual power is so well remembered by the numerous graduates of the institution, and which called forth the striking yet common remark that "Dr. Nott ruled Union College by his prayers."

It was the same man who had been in the morning occupied with stove-patents, or improvements in steam machinery, or the filling up of water-lots, or troubles on account of financial operations connected with them, who might be seen in the evening praying by the bedside of the dying, or healing by his spiritual consolations the wounds of afflicted Christian souls.* It was the same man who might, at one time, be conversing with statesmen, or delivering a temperance lecture, or urging upon the public attention some useful discovery, and a few hours afterward be found as intently engaged in healing the dissensions of private strife, and performing his loved office of peace-maker wherever he saw division, even though it might be among the poorest or most obscure of his neighbors. It was the same man who was said to be following every new idea, and examining every new movement of this rapidly moving age, who took the heartiest delight in expressing his love for the old Scripture, its majestic language, its sublime, unchanging verities, its old "doctrines of *grace*," as exhibited in the unearthly power they had exercised in all ages of the church, and all along that true churchly line of souls distinguished from others by an unearthly spirituality.

It was said by one of the newspapers, about the time of his death, that "Dr. Nott, though deserving the highest praise from all the friends of sound education, was neither a great scholar nor a great philosopher." It tempts us to repeat here what has before been said : He was something more than either of these characters, abstractly considered : he was great as a *man*, a man of splendid and beneficent action. Some of his inventions and discoveries, however, whatever the errors and mistakes that may be charged upon them, show that he might have been eminent as a man of science, had he devoted himself wholly to it in its more theoretical aspects, or had not the peculiar habit of his mind ever made the practical and the useful the limits of his speculations.

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* A very touching description of this is given in the letter of Dr. W. R. J. Taylor. Dr. Nott's Christian attention to him and his afflicted family, during a season of deep domestic sorrow, are most pathetically set forth, and with a warmth of style which shows how effective, as well as how hearty were the Christian advice and Christian consolation he imparted. He was not ecclesiastically connected with Dr. Taylor, but with the latter it was a time of deep grief, and that was enough to open an avenue to this old man's ever-flowing sympathy, even when he himself was the object of most harassing and calumnious assaults.

A similar assertion of want of scholarship has been made (with no intended disrespect, however, in either case) in regard to Francis Wayland; and yet old graduates of the college will call to mind how fond both of these men were of Homer, and how they used to spend their evenings together in the doctors' study, reading this prince of Greek poets in his original hexameters. The fact has been before alluded to. It is given here, not as proof of any great attainment in this department of literature, but as evidence of their fine classic taste, and of what they might have done in it, had not their aims and their duties called them to other pursuits, clamorously demanded by the age as more necessary and practical, if not really higher in their nature.

It was, however, as a *man*, a great souled, energetic, practical man, intent on making other energetic, practical men, who should leave their mark upon society, as he has done, that he chiefly claims our admiration. Whatever the department of education to which the minds of individual students, or of their parents, might be drawn, he held that it should ever have in view the *good* of man—not only his lower or common wants, but also the higher utilities of his being. Education might be, and it ought to be, at the same time highly intellectual, refined, spiritual, and yet practical—ever practical. In other words, whatever the course of instruction, whether exclusive or mixed, whether speculative, scientific, or classical, it was not for the closet, not for the laboratory, not for mere book-making, much less for the dilettante pursuits of literature and scholarship, but must be brought to bear upon the great interests of the world, and employed in the solution of questions that had come down through the ages, and were still agitating the heart of humanity. Education as a *soul excellence,* must have its *end* in itself, but its *use* is for the world. Lose sight of the one idea, and its *beauty* is gone ; take away the other, and its *goodness* has departed. The *honestum,* and the *utile* in its highest sense, both perish together when either is disregarded.

Love for others, was the motto of Dr. Nott ; and it was his practice, too. "In his own designs," says one* who wrote of him an appreciative obituary notice, "he was always regardless of self. For nearly seventy years the good man had attached himself upon the hearts of thousands, and working through them, had expressed himself, so to speak, in ten thousand lives ; in other words, through the grand common life of the nation. Thus, as the example shows, the good worker becomes, in a measure, identified with his work, and takes from it the essence of immortality." The language is that of a warm eulogist, but it has truth and pertinency.

We cannot bring this chapter, and this book, to a close, without giving, as highly illustrative of the Christian element in Dr. Nott's character, one incident that occurred at his funeral. This took place on a very stormy wintry day. As the long procession left the church, the driven snow was rapidly falling, and so continued until the arrival at the cemetery grounds. Though it was felt that there must be no deficiency in any attention paid to the honored remains, the inclemency of the weather made every one desirous of returning as soon as possible. Hence the close of the religious service at the grave was followed by the quick dispersion of the assembled multitude of friends and mourners. One, however, remained behind. He stood at the head of the grave in tears and silence, his eye never removed from the coffin as it was lowered to its last resting place. The assistants of the sexton had done their work and departed. The storm made every one anxious to find shelter ; but this solitary man still remained. The last persons of the retiring crowd, as they looked back, saw him still standing by the consecrated spot, until the darkening snows hid him from their sight. It was a poor man, a very humble *man*. We emphasize the word, for he was one of that race to whom many, in their theory, and still more, by their treatment, do virtually deny the attribute of a full *humanity*. He was a *man* for all that; for he possessed that highest thing in man—since nearest heaven—an intelligent humility. It was one of the darkest sons of Africa that paid this most *manly* as well as touching tribute to the dead. A number of years before, he had escaped from slavery at the South. He had been received by Dr. Nott, "no longer as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, both in the flesh and in the Lord." His benefactor remembered the words of Christ: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." It was a favorite text of Dr. Nott, often quoted in his sermons, and deeply uttered in his life. After the passage of "the fugitive slave law," apprehensions were felt for the safety of "the colored man," and the doctor, obeying "the higher law," assisted in his removal to Canada. The next step was to pay the lower, yet still recognized debt incurred to the Constitution of the United States. Dr. Nott acknowledged both. The funds were contributed for the purchase of his freedom, and Moses returned in safety, never again to depart from one to whom he felt his life devoted. He was the constant attendant of his exhausted age; he helped to nurse him during all his suffering decline. It was this man who remained, last of all, on that wintry day, looking intently down upon the closed grave. The reader will pardon us for dwelling upon the incident. No better illustration could be given of much that we have attempted to say than that which is drawn from the spiritual relation of these two friends—friends in the Saviour's sense of the word. No better proof could be offered of the perfect and undeniable manhood of the one, the essential greatness and goodness of the other.

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* Professor Wendell L'Amoureux, of Wells College.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

As an evidence of the estimation in which scientific men hold the benefits accruing from Dr. Nott's labors to make the "general principles of heat" minister to the comfort and convenience of society, the following extract is given from a letter of Professor Joseph Henry, the accomplished Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute. The views given of Dr. Nott by the writer are not confined to this one aspect of his work, but contain a wider characterization, which, for the interest it possesses, may be fittingly presented in its connection as written.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, November 14th, 1873.

DEAR SIR . . . . "I am sorry to inform you that a greater portion of my private letters were destroyed by the fire of 1865, in the Smithsonian building; among the remainder I have none from Dr. Nott. . . Dr. Nott exercised a very important influence on the political and moral progress of the State of New York. Many of the prominent officers and legislators of the State, were his pupils, and those who had the good fortune to sit under his instructions, ever afterward entertained a high appreciation of his wisdom, and were generally greatly influenced by his counsel. The late Governor Seward entertained a high regard for his memory and always spoke of him in terms of warm admiration.

The Doctor was by no means a recluse student, but took pleasure in an active participation in all the movements of his time, and apparently derived gratification from the result of his labors in this line He was a man of original thought and of no ordinary inventive power as is evinced by his investigations and inventions in regard to the best means of burning anthracite coal ; and in referring to this I may say he was a benefactor to his country by what he taught and the facilities he rendered in the general introduction as an article of domestic fuel, of this refractory but invaluable product.

He was one of the most impressive preachers I have ever heard, and especially excelled as a reader of the Scriptures. By his emphasis and inflection he brought out the sense of the portions read, with the effect, as it were, of a commentary. He was a close observer of what is denominated " human nature," and appeared to delight in the analysis of human character. He had accumulated a large collection of practical aphorisms in regard to human tendencies, which stood him in the way of valuable suggestions in the government of his students and his intercourse with the world. Although a very intelligent man, he excelled in wisdom more than in learning, and delighted more in a knowledge of general principles than in minute details.

" Very truly Yours,

" JOSEPH HENRY."

APPENDIX B.

In 1830 Dr. Nott received a letter from Dr. Vine Utley, one of the few remaining companions of his childhood, then a physician of respectability in Lyme, Connecticut. The character and object of this letter will appear from one or two extracts :

"DEAR SIR : I take the liberty to address a few lines to you, although it is nearly half a century since I have had the pleasure of seeing you. During that period you have occupied a place in my memory, and I have had the means of knowing the rapid progress you have made in literary attainments from the time you commenced to study with your brother Samuel in Franklin till you were elected President of Union College. Last autumn I visited Ashford, my native town, and while there I rode one day several miles, on purpose to view the humble cottage in which you were born. Then my eye glanced over the adjacent rough country where you and I spent several of our juvenile years together, rambling through the forest, and over the hills. There are now standing some of the very same trees back of the "meeting-house" that were there when you and I were boys. I remember attending divine worship with you at this meeting-house, and during the service, I observed that you frequently took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote or appeared to write the sermon down as delivered by the clergyman."

Dr. Utley then goes into various reminiscences of that boyish period, gives an account of some great feats of memory in Scripture recitation which he saw performed by Eliphalet at the instance of his mother, tells his own personal history during the interval, and then states the main object of his letter.

"I have learned the physical habits of several distinguished literary men in this country, divines, statesmen, and scientific men. Presidents Adams and Jefferson, Doctors Rush, Samuel Mitchell, and others have obligingly furnished me with a short history of their physical habits, which are very interesting as respects their strict temperance and sobriety. It will be highly gratifying to me if you will take the trouble to furnish me with yours. Please to inform me how many hours you sleep in the twenty-four—your hour of rising—if you drink tea or coffee, if you take distilled or fermented liquors—if you use tobacco in any way—animal or vegetable aliment, if you have any particular rule about it—if you use a cold or warm bath—also about your hours of study. Please send me your rule for keeping your mind in a regular state or mental condition suited for the instruction and governing of the institution over which you preside. . . May you be blessed with health and long life and continued usefulness to mankind.

"With much respect and esteem,

"Yours, etc., VINE UTLEY."

The following is Dr. Nott's reply :

UNION COLLEGE, February 20th, 1830.

"DEAR SIR: Your reference to the scenes of our youth, though at the distance of fifty years, has brought back to recollection, in all the freshness of original perception, incidents that had quite escaped me. Nor is it possible for my mind to be recalled in any way to the rock-bound soil of Ashford without emotion.

"The old cottage, the neighboring fields, the church and the grave that lay behind it, still possess even in remembrance, a resistless charm. I passed that way myself not long since, and though I could find no companion to share my feelings, I paused and lingered about those spots, where so many joys and so many sorrows of childhood were experienced. A remnant only of the house my father occupied remained. The inhabitants were gone. I found at some of the neighboring houses old men and women who were youth when I left the place. The heads of the families were gone, and it was only in the graveyard that I could find the names of those, who fifty years ago ocoupied the dwelling places I had visited.

"From 1798 to 1814, I studied hard, often from twelve to fourteen hours a day. I slept little, often but four hours out of the twenty-four, and took but little exercise. My health failing, I have since the latter period, studied less, taken more exercise and slept more, though it is still difficult for me to sleep when engaged in anything of interest. I have always lived for the most part, on a milk or vegetable diet. I eat a little meat daily, but very little. I drink tea or coffee usually very weak, and I prefer black to green tea. I do not use distilled or fermented liquors at all, and though I have used tobacco in all its forms, I have abandoned it in any of them, under a conviction that it was injurious to me. Since this abandonment, my health has been better, my spirits more buoyant and uniform. I have never formed the habit of using daily either the cold or warm bath, though I bathe often in the summer, and my feet in cold water during the entire year. My life has been a very busy one. Apart from my professional duties, the wants of the country have led me to prosecute a course of experiments on the evolution of heat, not yet finished, and which may issue in discoveries that will be of some use to the public.

"I shall be very happy to see you at my house, and should occasion offer, I shall not fail to call on you. We must both begin to rank with old men. Most of those who began to live when we did are no more. We shall follow in the steps of those who have lived before us, and soon cease to be known or even lamented among the living. What we have to do must be done vigorously, because it must be done quickly if ever done. As our parents have left this world to us, so we shall now leave it to those who come after us. Though I am ignorant of your personal history, I am not ignorant of what you have accomplished. The papers you refer to are familiar, but I was not aware that their author was a companion of my childhood; I see that Ashford, though sterile in its soil, produces men, and men of as much thrift as those born in a more favored locality.

"May a good Providence bless you and yours, and when we shall have done our Heavenly Father's will here, may we be received to his kingdom of glory above.

"Very Respectfully,

"E. NOTT."

APPENDIX C.

ON the 12th of March, 1849, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly, or the lower house of the New York Legislature, requiring "a report as to the financial condition of Union College." Such report was presented on the 5th of April, 1849, and, on the 11th of April, was referred to the Committee on Colleges, Schools, etc., with instructions to send for persons and papers, and to make a farther report at the next meeting of the legislature. This committee met at Schenectady on the 15th of May, in the same year. Aided by the officials of the college, they made such investigation as they deemed demanded, and on the 19th of March, the following year, gave an account of their proceeding to the legislature. They reported, as the sum of what they had ascertained, that "the financial condition of Union College was unsound and improper." One member of the committee, Mr. Pruyn, dissented from this conclusion, and stated the grounds of his own entire confidence in the pecuniary management of the institution. The treasurer of the college made his annual statement to the legislature on the 8th of April. In this he exhibited the many gross inaccuracies contained in the majority report just mentioned, challenged, on behalf of the trustees of the college, the fullest investigation, and demanded that it be done "in the form of a legal proceeding in which the parties should be brought face to face." No farther action was taken till the following year, when a report was made to the legislature, on April

12, 1851, as based on the majority report of the committee of 1849. This was written by the zealous prosecutor, the chairman of the legislative committee, and repeated the criminations and charges he had before made. Both these reports were published and spread broadcast over the State. Newspapers hostile to Dr. Nott took up the charges against him, the injustice and incredibility of which are now evinced from the very enormity of the statement. They would have it believed that $560,000 of college funds—a sum much beyond the State grants to be raised by the lotteries—had been appropriated to his own use by one who had hardly any other object for which he lived than the prosperity of this beloved institution.

The result of these accusations was, of course, a thorough investigation into the whole financial management of the college, from its organization, downward, to the time when the committee of inquiry was appointed. There was no concealment, no obstruction. The books of the college were all presented for the freest inspection. The most searching scrutiny was not only invited but demanded. All possible facilities were offered by the trustees and officers of the college to have the proposed investigation made exhaustive. The Assembly appointed a commission, who entered on their work with a heartiness and zeal that enabled them to make report of their labors in February 1852. It was fortunate for the college and for Dr. Nott that this rigid inquisition was made. Suspicions had for years been whispered in certain hostile quarters. There had been hints and rumors reflecting upon the venerable man through whose hands so large a part of the funds for the endowment and support of the institution had passed. These labors and this responsibility, as has been mentioned, were actually forced upon him even to the extent of making himself, and his most intimate friends, personally liable to the other institutions named in the lottery acts, all of which shrank from the hazards involved. If these charges were true, the trustees of the college were, of course, implicated, as every step taken had been with their full knowledge, vote, and sanction. The bare naming of these men is enough to show the extreme improbability of the accusation. Chancellor Walworth, Silas Wright, William James, Judge Campbell, Edward C. Delavan, Bradford R. Wood, clergymen like the Rev. Jacob Van Vechten, Bishop Alonzo Potter, the Rev. Dr. Trumbull Backus, besides the ex-officio State officers, must be held guilty not only of conniving at, but of actually planning and counselling the most frandulent transactions, with a full knowledge of their nefariousness. The good names of all these needed vindication, as well as that of the president. The matter itself was of a nature to arouse attention. The money transactions involved large sums. They ran through a long series of years. By reason of the several acts granting lotteries, their ill-understood methods, and the protracted periods of their drawing, the accounts had become extremely complicated, requiring rare financial skill and persistent labor for their unravelment. One well-fitted for such a work was speedily found.

The person who undertook to defend President Nott against his assailants, and to show how faithfully and honorably he had fulfilled every trust, was the Hon. John C. Spencer. He was one of the first lawyers in the country. Profoundly learned, an expert dialectician with a keen perception of the true points of a case, able to separate them from all entanglements, and by transparent statement to make the truth plain to every eye. He was, moreover, a staunch advocate of the right, with rare capacity for concentrating his mind upon a subject, marvellous patience in mastering its details, and unyielding tenacity in following it until its ends were reached. He entered upon the work as a volunteer, with no desire of other reward than the satisfaction of clearing an honored name from an odium which he knew was unjust. It may be said, too, that it was with him a labor of love. He was a pupil of Dr. Nott, having graduated from Union College in 1806; and with the fullest confidence in the integrity of his old instructor he shared the sentiment of regard and affection for him common to all who had enjoyed the rich benefit of his teaching.

Precisely what Mr. Spencer undertook to do is best explained in his own words. "Before we finish the investigation," he says, "you will have learned to your entire satisfaction that Dr. Nott was not a borrower of the funds of the college, for his own use; that the only loans made to him were of moneys laid out in purchases of property for the college, and for improvements of its real estate and buildings, and that the other advances were made for the purpose of saving to the college the utmost amount of interest in the money paid to the treasurer. With the sanction of the trustees, he was in the habit of temporarily withdrawing such money upon his own notes, or obligations, *on interest*, until he could safely invest them permanently, and then substituting the securities he had received for those he had given. In addition to his personal responsibility, and the collateral securities which he thus temporarily left with the treasurer, there were always on deposit with that officer, private funds belonging to the president far exceeding the amounts thus temporarily withdrawn. Yet these transactions, none of which carry on their face evidence of their being of the nature described, were characterized by his maligners as personal loans. An impression was thus produced that Dr. Nott had wantonly violated all the duties of his station, and put at hazard the very existence of the college by such an illegal and wicked perversion of its funds. And this ingenious report was circulated with great activity throughout the country."

This is what Mr. Spencer undertook to show. How he succeeded is known to every man who has carefully read his argument in the case before the committee of the legislature—an argument which, in the thorough knowledge it displays, in its transparent statement, in its incisive logic, and its strong conclusions, is one of the most remarkable in our legislative annals. Every charge of financial dereliction is fairly met, every position taken by opponents is overthrown, and the integrity of the accused shown by an array of proof amounting to demonstration. The president's vindication is not only complete but triumphant, and as a fruit of this gratifying result of a painful controversy, the friends of the college, everywhere, found themselves satisfied and freed from all future annoyances that might arise from similar assaults.

To give even an outline of Mr. Spencer's argument would require more space than can here be devoted to it, and is in fact unnecessary, as the public has long been acquainted with the real truth of the case.

Those who wish to see a brief but comprehensive statement of the points at issue, are referred to the article that follows, from the "New York Times," of January 1854. It is enough to commend it to the reader, and to insure the fullest confidence in the accuracy of its reasoning, as well as of its financial summing, to state that it is a carefully prepared editorial from the pen of the late Henry J. Raymond, As coming from one so able, so disinterested, and whose only motive was to sustain the deservedly high character of his paper by the most carefully prepared and truthful statement of important events, it carries with it an authority that must silence all questioning.

STATEMENT FROM NEW YORK TIMES OF JANUARY, 1854.

"The telegraph from Albany announced a few days since, that Dr. Nott had *paid* to Union College $600,000. This is represented in some quarters as the discharge of a *debt*, while in others it is claimed as a *donation*. Its character depends wholly upon the decision of a controversy which has been pending for some years past concerning the financial relations of Dr. Nott to Union College, which has been made repeatedly the subject of legislative action, and which at the last session was referred, for the final verdict, to a committee of the Senate, consisting of Senators Ward, Jones, and Vanderbilt. The committee took testimony and heard counsel upon the subject, and has just made a report *denying*, in the most distinct and explicit manner, the alleged indebtedness of Dr. Nott to Union College. The termination of the long controversy affords a proper occasion for a condensed statement of its history, and of the various points which it involved.

"It should first be stated that Union College never claimed that Dr. Nott was its debtor. The charges against him were not brought by the college, nor any of its officers or friends—but by strangers and enemies to both. The substance of them was, that President Nott had used the funds of the college for his private benefit, that he had speculated upon money which belonged to the college, converting it to his private uses, and adding it to his private fortune. Of course, such an allegation involved an imputation of dishonesty. It was repeatedly urged, and pressed in reports and speeches with great tenacity, in each branch of the legislature, by Mr. Beekman, successively a member of both from this city—and found an ardent prosecutor in Mr. L. Vanderheyden, who was appointed an "accountant to examine the college books." The committees appointed on the subject, uniformly consisted of persons known to sustain relations of hostility to Dr. Nott, and their proceedings were governed by their prejudices. The trustees and friends of the college and of its president, tried repeatedly, in vain, to obtain a hearing, and the reports made by these committees were partial, unfair, and hostile to the last degree. The transactions involved extended over a period of fifty years—the amount of money concerned reached several millions of dollars—and owing to the unskilful mode in which the accounts had been kept, the lapse of time since the items were entered, and the complicated character of some of the transactions, it had become a task to which few men were equal, and for which still fewer had the leisure and the patience to sift the whole matter, and clear it from the mystery and suspicion which it had been found easy to throw around it.

"A fair and unprejudiced committee was fortunately at last obtained ; and still more fortunately for the cause of justice, the man, before all others transcendently qualified for so gigantic a labor, volunteered to enter upon it. That man was John C. Spencer. Having faith in the *character* of Dr. Nott, he devoted more than a year to the study of the case in all its details and relations—declining all fee or reward—and, at the end of that investigation, he presented to the committee an exposition of the facts of the case, which we have read with the deepest interest, and which, in clearness, cogency, power, and conclusiveness of argument, is one of the most admirable papers we have seen. It will add new laurels even to the large fame which Mr. Spencer has long enjoyed, as a jurist of great learning and of unequalled intellectual power.

"The charge preferred against Dr. Nott grows wholly out of his connection with the *lotteries* which were authorized by the State for the benefit of Union and other colleges. When Dr. Nott became its president, in 1804, the fortunes of Union College seemed desperate. After nine years' effort its resources were exhausted, its buildings, libraries, and other apparatus inadequate, and its prospects gloomy. Dr. Nott left an honorable, influential, and most agreeable post, with the fixed purpose of devoting all the energies of his life to the service of the college. One of the first efforts was to procure a legislative endowment. Instead of granting money, the legislature, in 1805, authorized four lotteries to be drawn, to produce $85,000 on its behalf. The drawing was not completed till 1814, and its net avails were only $76,138. A new effort was then made by the president; and, an act was passed April 13, 1814, by which lotteries were authorized to raise the following sums, granted by the act, as follows: To Union College, $200,000; to Hamilton College, $40,000; to the Ashbury African Church in New York, $4,000; to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, $30,000; and to the Historical Society, $12,000—all but the latter to be upon interest. The managers of these lotteries, being paid salaries, were remiss in their duties, and from 1814 to 1825, nothing was realized to pay a dollar of the principal sums granted, nor even enough to meet the interest. Another effort was needed to make these grants available; and through the exertions of President Nott, an act was passed April 5, 1822, reciting that, as the institutions named had suffered materially by delay in drawing the lotteries, they were authorized to assume, or to appoint one of their number to assume, their entire management, and to receive the avails, hazard the losses, and be responsible for the payment of the prizes. The avails of the lottery, *after deducting the expenses of management*, were to be appropriated to the satisfaction of the grantees. Hamilton College and the other original grantees could not be induced to accept these terms; and, in this new dilemma President Nott proposed that Union College should *purchase* the interest of all the other institutions, and assume the management of the lotteries. The trustees assented, and appointed the president *sole manager* of the whole affair. He effected the purchase proposed, and prepared a scheme for the drawing of the lottery. The State authorities decided that, to meet the provisions of the act, cover the expenses of the management, and satisfy the grants of the institutions concerned, the whole amount of tickets to be drawn would be $4,492,800, and that the drawing must be completed in *eleven* years. In order to raise any given sum according to the legal mode of drawing lotteries, the amount of tickets to be sold was fixed at such a sum, that *fifteen* per cent. on the prizes therein would produce the amount required. The law fixed the compensation for management at fifteen per cent. on the sum raised, which was equivalent to *two and a quarter* per cent. on the whole number of tickets drawn. A contract was made with Yates and McIntyre for the sale of tickets, etc., for which they were to receive *four* per cent. out of the fifteen, leaving *eleven* per cent to be raised on the whole amounts of tickets to be sold—equal to $494,208. From this was to be deducted 2¼ per cent., for management —equal to $101,088 ; which would leave for the purpose of the grants *eight and three quarters* per cent., or $393,120. This was to be raised in *eleven years,* and its present value was $276,000.14. Having made these estimates, Dr. Nott, in pursuance of the authority conferred upon him, sold to Yates and McIntyre the right and title of Union College to the whole amount of tickets, at the scheme price, for the sum of $276,000.14. And by a supplemental contract, Yates and McIntyre agreed to pay, in addition, the same per cent. for management as had been allowed by the State, viz., *two and a quarter* per cent. on the tickets.

"Under these arrangements, Yates and McIntyre commenced the sale of tickets, but in a year or two became embarrassed, and informed Dr. Nott that unless aided by large amounts of money they must fail. Dr. Nott pledged his own and his wife's property, and raised a very large sum of money for their relief—the college also raising part—in return for which, in 1826, they agreed to pay such an *additional* sum as should, together with the $276,000.14 for which they were already holden, amount to *eleven* per cent. on all the tickets sold. And soon after, Yates and McIntyre again becoming involved, were again relieved by the personal efforts and loans of Dr. Nott, in return for which still further stipulations were entered into. The drawings of the lottery were finished in 1827 nearly five years sooner than the time fixed by the State—and, that too, mainly through the agency and energy of Dr. Nott. From these new stipulations, as appeared upon a settlement in 1828, there resulted a profit of $133,069.38, which Yates and

McIntyre agreed to pay in addition to their original note of $276,000.14, and which was put into twenty-four notes payable at different times ending December 1, 1831, making, with interest included, the aggregate of $163,712.78.

"Now thus far we have found *two* points on which Dr. Nott has clearly a claim to private compensation : *first,* the *two and a quarter* per cent. allowed by law to the manager of the lotteries, and *second,* his equitable *share* of the profits arising from the new stipulation into which Yates and McIntyre had entered, in consideration for the relief they had received from Dr. Nott's private purse and the college treasury. Even the very condensed narrative we have given, will have made it clear, that both these items belonged to him individually. The college trustees took the same view of it, and acted accordingly. The *two and a quarter* per cent fund, what ever it might yield, was considered his private property ; and in the division of the $162,713.78 profits, $90,951.08 were assigned to the college, and $71,691.70 to Dr. Nott.

"Presently a dispute arose between Yates and McIntyre and Dr. Nott, founded upon other lottery operations in which the former had been largely aided by the latter, and Dr. Nott commenced a suit against them. Yates and McIntyre also commenced a suit against Union College, alleging that an error had been made in the estimates, that the amount of tickets to be drawn under the act of 1822 had been fixed $456,391 too high, and that they had paid the college *eight and three-quarters* per cent on that sum in error. They sought therefore to recover that amount. It was finally ascertained and admitted that this allegation was true, that the error *had* been committed, and that the money ought to be refunded. In 1837, therefore, an amicable settlement was effected, by which the college, in consideration of this error, surrendered to Yates and McIntyre various securities and liabilities to the amount of $94,448.47. Dr. Nott's claims against them amounting to a very large sum, were discharged by a bond of $150,000, much less than he believed he could have recovered at law. This bond was also clearly and undeniably the private property of Dr. Nott.

"Now the sole foundation on which all the charges against Dr. Nott have been based consists in the allegation that (1) the proceeds of the *two and a quarter* per cent., legally due for the maintenance of the lotteries, and payable to the manager—(2) the $71,691.29, awarded by the college to Dr. Nott as his share of the profits growing out of the stipulations of 1826 with Messrs. Yates and McIntyre; and (3) this bond of 150,000, given to Nott for money advanced and other aid afforded to their general business, *belonged to Union College and not to Dr. Nott*:—and that in regarding and treating these sums as his private property Dr. Nott was guilty of applying the funds of the college to his own use. It is true there are other items charged against him—but these are the chief, and lay the foundation, moreover, for all the rest. The sketch we have given of the transactions out of which they grew, brief as it is, will serve to show how utterly groundless these charges are. And to those who desire to see them most thoroughly exploded, and the brand of falsehood ineffaceably stamped upon the whole brood of allegations in which they figure as the chief, we commend the incontrovertible exposition of Mr. Spencer already referred to. It leaves no loop-hole, no plausible evasion, even, by which the inventors and propagators of the charges can escape the responsibility of unfounded accusations.

"And now we return to the paragraph which has led to these comments. In the very outset of these controversies in 1831 and 1832, Dr. Nott announced his intention ultimately to appropriate every dollar that he might realize from these operations to the use of Union College; but he desired to retain the management of it while he lived, believing that he could thus largely increase the amount, and also to designate the specific objects to which it should be applied. He has never changed or faltered in that purpose, but has repeatedly executed such deeds to carry it into effect as the law would sanction. Until very recently, however, this transfer could not be fully and finally perfected. But it has now been done; and as we have already announced, Dr. Nott has made to Union College a *donation* of over $600,000, for the establishment of prefessorships, scholarships, and other purposes specified in his conveyance. So far then as the interests of the college are concerned, it makes no difference what verdict may be pronounced upon the charges made against him. Whether it be a debt, or donation, the college has the money. The only motive his persecutors can have in insisting that this is the discharge of the *debt*, and *not* a donation, is to blacken his character, torture the last years of his long, useful, and honored life, and throw a cloud of suspicion upon his integrity in after ages. His own conscious purity of purpose will foil the most malignant part of their object; and the noble friendship of John C. Spencer has defeated the rest."

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